Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/mainsofyonderton0000will

Books should be returned on or before the last date stamped below.

13 MAY 2020

ABERDEENSHIRE LIBRARIES

WITHDRAWN FROM LIBRARY

MELDRUM MEG WAY, OLDMELDRUM

SFR

ROBBIE, WILLIAM

Mains of Yonderton: a story of domestic life in the Buchan district

F

461658

N E S L S

461658

Mains of Yonderton

by

WILLIAM ROBBIE

MAINS OF YONDERTON.

[Photo by G. W. Wilson & Co. Ltd.

William Robbie.

MAINS OF YONDERTON

A STORY OF DOMESTIC LIFE IN THE BUCHAN DISTRICT

BY

WILLIAM ROBBIE

Author of "The Heir of Glendornie" and
"Aberdeen: Its Traditions and History"

PRINTERS
MILNE & HUTCHISON
ABERDEEN

I.S.B.D A 6779.

SOME BOOKS ARE TO BE TASTED, OTHERS TO BE SWALLOWED,
AND SOME FEW TO BE CHEWED AND DIGESTED. — Bacon

F
461655

PREFACE.

I FEEL honoured to have the opportunity of furnishing a few remarks on this volume, because the vernacular novels of the Buchan district form quite a library in themselves, and in these days many of them are difficult to procure. To enumerate them, too, is a task for a skilled bibliographer.

The author of this tale was descended on the maternal side from a family of Craig, farmers in the parish of Rathen, and from this connection we must infer that the homely and expressive speech of Buchan was natural to him. The tale of "Mains of Yonderton," as we learn from the introduction, appeared in serial form in the *Aberdeen Weekly Free Press,* and was warmly appreciated by readers. It was the author's intention to publish it in book form long ago, but even its belated appearance now has not lessened the peculiar interest manifested in vernacular writings, and, more so, because Mr. Robbie's story deals with Buchan life and Aberdeen incidents of a century ago with much freshness. Even to-day the dialect of Buchan has lost little of its charm or vitality, and, in consequence, the district is regarded as a rich field for all investigators, whether in language, customs or folk lore, or even in that scholarly branch of ballad and folk song of which so much has been preserved by enthusiasts.

The characters depicted in this invaluable book, mostly drawn from life, are sketched with freedom and

success, and we deem the story worthy of being preserved in book form—the racy speech of Buchan—and all that it means to us living in the North-east corner of Aberdeenshire, as also further afield.

As is well known, Mr. Robbie's scholarly, readable and reliable historical study, "Aberdeen: Its Traditions and History," has not been superseded, although a new edition is now long overdue. In other fields of inquiry, however, as the reader will discover as he reads this fine tale, Mr. Robbie shews that he possessed a profound grasp of the dialect of Buchan, which district, geographically, is a place by itself.

We make bold to assert that "Mains of Yonderton" is a genuine Buchan product—the scene is laid in that fine agricultural district, and the characters are true to life. Its author left his mark on Aberdeenshire literature, and this book completes his full fruits of authorship.

May the book reach the hearts and homes of all who wish well of the guid auld mither tongue, and of the kindly ways of a century ago.

Robert Murdoch Lawrance, F.S.A.Scot.

Xmas, 1928.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The Mains, Now and Then	3
II.	David Buchan, Personally and Relatively .	7
III.	The Hospitalities at Mains of Yonderton .	13
IV.	About making the Tes'ment	17
V.	Tam Paterson and Frank Hepburn . . .	21
VI.	Mrs. Buchan's Death—Jock Hooieson's Project for Breaking up the Lyke-wake . .	29
VII.	The Project is a Success	34
VIII.	Tam Paterson commences Business . . .	39
IX.	Frank Hepburn and Patrick Johnston begin Life	47
X.	David Buchan as a Widower	50
XI.	Mains becomes a "Fail't Man" . . .	53
XII.	A Word of Caution and a Resolve . . .	57
XIII.	David Buchan calls on the Minister . .	61
XIV.	Tam Paterson in Difficulties	66
XV.	A Memorable Storm	72
XVI.	The Loss of the "Oscar"	75
XVII.	Frank Hepburn's Return to the Mains . .	82
XVIII.	Nancy Walker, the Pack Merchan' . . .	87
XIX.	Nancy Walker visits Peterhead . . .	92

CHAPTER		PAGE
XX.	She gives Mains a Piece of News which rather astonishes Him	97
XXI.	David Buchan Ruminates	102
XXII.	Gibbie Ramsay pays Mains a Visit	105
XXIII.	Mains alters his Tes'ment	111
XXIV.	The End Approaches	115
XXV.	A Hasty Call	119
XXVI.	Tam Paterson thinks Himself Slighted	123
XXVII.	The Funeral	127
XXVIII.	The Reading of the Will	132
XXIX.	Subsequent Arrangements	138
XXX.	Forty Years After	141
XXXI.	The Wreck of the "Duke of Sutherland"	146
XXXII.	Former Scenes Revisited	152
XXXIII.	The Old Times and the New	158
Appendix I.	The Corn Famine of 1782	167
" II.	Total Wreck of the "Duke of Sutherland"	170

INTRODUCTION.

William Robbie, the author of this story, was born in Skene Square, Aberdeen, in 1829, his father, a slater by trade, being described as a feuar of Gilcomston.

Early in life he became an apprentice with an ironmonger, named William Clark, in Broad Street. Mr. Robbie, however, very soon abandoned that career and attended King's College for two sessions, 1852-53. He afterwards entered the service of Messrs. Jopp and Shand, Advocates, in Gallowgate, Aberdeen, with whom and their successors, Jopp & Reid, Reid & Wilsone, and Wilsone & Duffus, he continued till his death in 1914—a period of 60 years. Of a retiring disposition, Mr. Robbie devoted his spare moments to literary study. He was particularly fond of biography, and if he had a hobby, it was studying the lore of the city and the county, and particularly of the Buchan district, with the dialect of which he was most familiar.

The "Mains of Yonderton" first appeared as a serial in the *Aberdeen Weekly Free Press*, and now appears for the first time in book form. It was the author's first effort in story-writing. It is a homely tale, containing sketches of characters and manners in the Deer district about a century ago. It is rich in dialogue of the native Doric, and gives descriptive accounts of the wreck of the whaling ship, "Oscar," on

1st April, 1813, and the "Duke of Sutherland" on 1st April, 1853.

His second effort in story-writing, "The Heir of Glendornie," also appeared as a serial in the *Aberdeen Weekly Free Press*, and was published in book form in 1880. The story is based on local incidents about the beginning of last century.

Mr. Robbie's principal work was "Aberdeen: Its Traditions and History," which was published in 1893. As a local book it takes the highest rank, and is indispensable to all who desire to be accurately informed of the growth and progress of Aberdeen.

Mr. Robbie died on 7th December, 1914, aged 86 years, and was unmarried. He was the oldest elder of Bon-Accord U.F. Church, Aberdeen, having been ordained in 1861.

A. C. R.

Mains of Yonderton.

I.—The Mains, Now and Then.

The farm to which we have given the name of Mains of Yonderton lies in the district of Deer, and was one of the best farms in the eastern division of the county of Aberdeen in 1870. "The soil," as the advertisements say, "is of a superior quality, with a fine southern exposure." The fields were laid off with great regularity, and well fenced and watered; there was a fine steading of offices on the place, built in the form of a square, arranged internally on the most approved principles of farm architecture. At one corner of the steading there was a threshing mill driven by steam power, and the dwelling-house, which stood about 200 yards to the west of the steading, was a handsome structure, in which the best gentleman in the county might be happy to spend his days.

Such was the Mains farm about 1870, but in the early part of the 19th century, when old David Buchan was the tenant, it presented quite another appearance; and in nothing, perhaps, is the great progress which agriculture has made in recent years more observable than in comparing two pictures so very different. At the beginning of the 19th century the farm was of much less extent than it is now, as several other smaller holdings were added to it as they fell out of lease. Then, the soil, though naturally good, was cold and wet, from the complete absence of drainage, and it was but moderately

productive even in a favourable season, while in an unfavourable year the crop would be almost a complete failure. The division of the fields was extremely irregular and indefinite; patches of whins and broom disfigured the place (agriculturally speaking), and, as there were no fences worthy of the name, the cattle were "herded" on the pasture land. There was a threshing mill driven by water, but it was of very rude construction, and, as the supply of water was uncertain, a good part of the year's crop had usually to be threshed with the flail. With regard to the steading, it consisted of several low thatched houses, or rather "rickles," planted here and there without one particle of taste or design, just as if they had tumbled down there by accident. The dwelling-house was also a low thatched building, consisting of a "but and a ben," with a middle "closet"; and the furniture was of the plainest description. Overhead and just underneath the thatch, were two small attics or lofts, each lighted by a single pane of glass about a foot square in the gable wall, and the access to these apartments was by a trap stair or ladder, such as is commonly seen leading from a stable to the hayloft above. These rooms were used chiefly as store places, and contained a miscellaneous collection of useful articles, such as bundles of wool, spare blankets, spinning-wheels, bee "skeps" and the smaller implements of husbandry when not in use; but, in the harvest time, the rooms were used as sleeping apartments for the women employed as extra hands during that busy season of the year.

Perhaps the most cosy-looking thing about the place externally was a huge peat "stack," which stood in close proximity to the dwelling-house, for it suggested the thought that whatever comforts the farmer and his household might want, particularly during the long and severe winters that were then so common, they could at

all times have a good fire. About fifty yards behind the dwelling-house were some remains of an old baronial pile, which, it was believed, had once been the residence of the lord of the manor. The portions of the ruins that were still standing were covered with ivy, but the walls, that in a bygone age had doubtless echoed with the festive mirth of lords and ladies gay, were now the resort of the screech owl and the bat. On the whole, the ivied ruin seemed to give the place a more forlorn and comfortless aspect.

Such, as we have said, was the farm of Mains of Yonderton at the beginning of last century, and yet, on a place which, in the condition it then was, our modern farmers would denounce as a "cauld bare scaup," the tenant lived quite comfortably after his own fashion, and not only lived but made money. Only, it must be borne in mind that the rent was low and labour was cheap. Grain sold at high prices, and, though the crops were often but very moderate, there were no heavy accounts to pay for guano, phosphates or other artificial manures, which, nowadays, cause such a heavy draft on the farmers' resources. And, above all, the power of thrift is wonderful.

But if the difference upon the farm is great, the change that has taken place in the habits and style of living is equally so. In 1875, the tenant of Mains of Yonderton was a gentleman. He never soiled his hands with labour, for he rarely walked abroad without drawing on his gloves. He did not even instruct his servants personally as to the work he wished to be performed. His "grieve" did that. He would not go a mile from home except on horseback. He took a great interest in politics; denounced the game laws, hypothec, and the Tory lairds. He never sat down to dinner without beef or mutton on the table, and when he invited a few of his brother farmers and their wives to dine with him, the

table was covered with good things, and after dinner the party adjourned to the "drawing-room," where his daughters sang songs with piano accompaniment and exhibited other fashionable accomplishments; while the gentlemen talked of high-class farming or the breeding of shorthorns; and the elder ladies gossiped about their neighbours' affairs.

But plain David Buchan, who was tenant of the farm in 1805, and for twenty years before that time, was a totally different style of man from this, as we hope to let the reader understand in full detail all in its place.

II.—David Buchan, Personally and Relatively.

David Buchan, we have said, was somewhat different from the modern gentleman farmer who can afford to walk with gloved hands and straight back. David, in the matter of occupation, was always the hardest wrought man about the place, till old age crept upon him and his strength began to fail. Gloves on *his* hands! Well, that would have been a rare sight, although, when he had occasion to go from home in cold frosty weather, he sometimes put on a pair of "hummle mittens." He wrought among his servants, took his meals with them in the kitchen, and sat with them round the ingle after the labours of the day were over. As to politics—it was little they were heard of in the region—and in any case David would have deemed it nothing more than his duty to vote as his laird or factor told him to do. It was doubtful whether he himself had ever come to know the difference between a Whig and a Tory. The same suit of clothes served him for kirk and market for 20 years. A change in the fashion did not trouble him so long as his comfort was not affected. As to farming, it was quite a mechanical process with him, and he viewed with suspicion and distrust all changes or alleged improvements. When David went to the market it was usually on foot. He took a supply of oatcakes and a "fang" of cheese with him in his pocket, and twopence for a bottle of ale to wash down this simple fare would be all his outlay. Butcher meat he never tasted except about Christmas time, when he sometimes joined with a few of his neighbours in killing a "mairt," which they divided among them.

It must be admitted, however, that Mr. Buchan, or "Mains," as he was usually called, lagged a good deal behind most of his neighbours of the same standing as himself, both as regards the style of his wardrobe and the scale of the diet that he was willing to allow to himself and his household. It was all very well for him to say that he did not care about new-fangled things, and that the plainer a man lived the stronger he would be. There were other and more powerful reasons than those for his habits of thrift and economy. The fact is, for we may as well confess it at once, that Mains was very fond of saving money, and made it a rule never to part with a copper if he could avoid it, acting upon the principle that "a penny saved is a penny gained" — a maxim, by the way, which he was very fond of quoting. Brought up in the midst of poverty, he became possessed of a considerable sum of money in the following manner.

The former tenant of the Mains farm had died, leaving an only daughter, who succeeded to all his property, including the remainder of the lease. She found it necessary to have, as a superior servant, a person who was fit to take the management or oversight of the farm, and David Buchan, having been recommended as in every way suitable, was engaged by her in that capacity. At that time he was a strong, vigorous fellow, above the middle height, and having a rather ponderous if not well-knit frame. He had very large hands and feet; the latter turned out a good deal at the toes, or, to speak more plainly, "skyeowed." His gait was awkward, so that when yet a young man, comparatively speaking, he had the appearance of one who had been prematurely broken down with hard work. His complexion was dark; a shock head of brown hair, which rarely saw a comb but on Sundays; large, but not unpleasant features, though without much expression, save that his eyes and mouth seemed to indicate a

combination of good nature and cunning. When he was engaged as overseer at Mains of Yonderton he was younger than his employer by several years—at least, so it was said. But, be that as it may, after he had acted as foreman or grieve for about two years, it was his good fortune to marry his mistress, and thus he became tenant of the farm and proprietor of all that was on it, besides several hundred pounds in hard cash.

"Ye see Dawvid's gotten a braw doon-sit," said the neighbours. "Only he was aye a canny, siccar kin' o' a breet."

It might be supposed that a union formed under such circumstances would prove to be not a happy one; but in the case of the persons before us, there was nothing to complain of in that respect. There was really not much of the tender passion on either side. The man had become necessary to the mistress in the management of the farm, and to become the master instead of the man was to David Buchan a change of position and circumstances so advantageous that he would have deemed himself a fool to let it slip. These were the chief elements that operated in bringing about the union. But, fortunately, Mrs. Buchan was a good-natured, easy-minded sort of person, and, though by no means destitute of energy in her own sphere, it never would have occurred to her to affect any superiority, or to "cast up" to her husband that she had been "the makin' o' 'im," as some ladies of spirit might have been apt to do in similar circumstances. As for Mains himself, he was a man who could get on pleasantly enough with anybody if they would only allow him to jog along in his own way. He was a man of no great mind, and had received an indifferent education, so that he did not enjoy reading, and could not speak much sense on any subject except cattle and crops; but his bodily habits were active, and he was most in his element when he was hard

at work in the field and keeping every other body on the place hard at it too. If there was one thing that provoked him to anger more than another it was to see folk working as if they were half asleep, or afraid that they would do too much.

It was strange to observe the change which his marriage produced on David Buchan's habits and his views on economy. When he was a poor servant man, although he was somewhat selfish and "hame-drachtit," he did not manifest any great propensity for saving money. Indeed, the supply of that useful article that found its way into his pockets was so limited that it could hardly have been worth his while attempting to do so. But when he came to be possessed of considerable means in the manner just explained, he became exceedingly thrifty and saving in his habits, and the one object which he kept steadily in view was always to be adding something to his store.

David Buchan was certainly a hard man at a bargain. When he bought he would beat down the price to the utmost, and would haggle so long over a difference of a few shillings that sometimes the seller, wearied with his persistency, would just "lat it gang wi' 'im," rather than waste more time over it. But when he himself was the seller, then he stood out as resolutely for the highest price that could be got, and made it a point to exact the utmost penny of the sum that had been agreed on. If he sold a stirk in the market, and the question of a "luck-penny" was left to his own generosity, the buyer was sure to be disappointed. "Na, na," David would say, slipping the money into his pocket-book, "I'se assear ye the beast's chape; ye hiv a rale gweed bargain, for aw wis offer't a croon mair for't upo' the road to the market. Aw dinna ken hoo aw wis sae stupit as nae tak' it; but we'll jist need to be wiser neist." This mean style of doing business was quite foreign to Mrs. Buchan's

nature, for she had a heart that overflowed with benevolence, and had kind words and kind deeds for all who came in contact with her. As a natural consequence, everybody liked her, but she was of a mild, retiring disposition, and as she never enjoyed very robust health, she took but little concern in the management of the farm save in the domestic arrangements, and yet, in her own quiet way, she exercised considerable influence over her husband. She had always been accustomed to see things managed on more liberal principles, for her parents had been noted for their habits of open-handed generosity, and she took ill with anything that she might observe which she considered to be mean or shabby on her husband's part. On this account she would sometimes reason with him about the unseemliness of his conduct when his grasping disposition would manifest itself in any transaction that might happen to come under her notice, and on these occasions her father's mode of conducting his affairs was generally referred to by way of contrast. "I'm sure, man," she would say, "ye're nae needin' to be sae hard-hanit as a' that. A body wud think to hear the wye 'at ye speak sometimes 'at we war jist peer craters livin' frae han' to moo, or strugglin' to get en's to meet; an' yet I doot there's nae very mony o' oor neebors sae weel aff."

"Dear me, 'oman," he would say, "hooever weel aff we may be, ye seerly dinna mean to say 'at if we hae a beast or a puckle corn to dispose o', we maun throw them awa' for fat onybody likes to offer's. Aw doot if we waur to work lang that wye, we wud seen be peer aneuch."

"Na, na; ye ken brawly that's nae fat I mean to say; but there's a midse in that as weel as a' ither thing, an' middlin' things are aye best. I'm seer my faader did weel upo' this place, an' he wud 'a never stan't oot for the hinmost penny the wye 'at I hear you deein' sometimes."

"Weel, he was a fine body yer faader, an' weel respeckit; but I'se warran' ye he likeit aye to get as gweed a price as was a-gaen for a' that."

And David would let the colloquy be wound up thus, well satisfied internally at the conclusiveness of the answer he felt himself to have given.

III.—The Hospitalities at Mains of Yonderton.

ALTHOUGH, as far as mere words were concerned, little good seemed to result from these remonstrances on the part of Mrs. Buchan, yet, as they were generally well timed and not urged too far, they really had some effect on her husband, who, under the influence of her more generous disposition, would occasionally do business in a more liberal manner, particularly if his wife happened to be present.

There was one thing, however, in which Mrs. Buchan resolutely took her own way, and that was in observing the same open-handed fullness in her household economy to which she had always been accustomed. Thus it came to be remarked that, though David Buchan was known to be the very essence of meanness, yet there was not a house in the parish where friends were more hospitably entertained than at the Mains, and the poor never turned from the door without receiving a plentiful supply of food, or quarters for the night if such was their request. During the winter months of what are sometimes spoken of as "ill years," toward the close of the last century, there was much distress in the country, and the barn at Mains of Yonderton was seldom many nights together without some poor wanderer under its sheltering roof. It is true a sturdy beggar would sometimes requite the mistress's kindness by taking his departure before anybody was stirring in the morning, carrying off with him the blankets that had covered his comfortable bed

among the straw, and anything else he could lay his hands on conveniently; but though she felt a momentary disappointment at such heartless ingratitude, she could not feel in her heart to refuse shelter to the next tramp who presented himself, for she could never see misery without doing what she could to relieve it. Mains would often urge on his wife the propriety of dispensing her charity with a less liberal hand.

"I think that beggar fowk 'ill tak' a' 'at we hae," he would say; "really, 'oman, ye sud hae some consideration aboot ye. We micht as well oppen a public at eence, an' put up a bit boordie intimatin' 'Comfortable quarters, an' naething to pay'; for there's hardly ever a nicht but we hiv some orra-leukin' craetur or ither aboot the toon. This is nae the first time 'at they've stowen the bed-claes, forbye ither things. I expect 'at some nicht we'll be a' robbit an' murder't in oor beds, or the oot-hooses set on fire an' burnt to the grun'."

But Mrs. Buchan's warm heart and kindly nature were ever ready to put in a word on behalf of the homeless poor.

"We maun jist trust i' the Almichty," she would say, "an' dee fat's richt; but for my pairt, I cud hae but little enjoyment in oor ain comforts gin aw thocht 'at ony peer craetur 'at had been refees't quarters here was starvin' wi' hunger or coorin' fae the blast at a cauld dykeside."

When the conversation took this turn Mains knew it was of no use to continue it, and, like a wise man, he would pursue it no further at that time, convinced as he was that his wife would take her own way.

The ordinary "casual" only called in passing, or at most tarried but for a night; but there was one individual in particular of the itinerant fraternity at whom Mains would sometimes feel more annoyed than at all the rest, for when he paid his visits he took up his quarters with

as much freedom as if he had been one of the household. This was a poor half-witted creature called Peter Milne, who wandered about in the locality, and who came to Mains of Yonderton very often, frequently prolonging his stay for a week or ten days at a time, for the simple reason that Mrs. Buchan was very kind to him, and he found he was better entertained there than at any other farm houses in the district. Many a "rippet" there used to be between Mains and his better half about the frequency of poor Peter's visits and the length of time over which they sometimes extended. Like many of his class, Peter could consume a large quantity of food, and Mains used to get very angry whenever he saw him coming in the direction of the house.

"There's that wan'erin-aboot gutsy craetur, Peter Mull, again," he would say. "Od, I wonner fat feshes 'im sae aften this gate?"

"O peer feel thing," Mrs. Buchan would say, "I'm aye gled to see 'im."

"He's nae siccan a feel but fat he kens faur to get plenty o' mate."

"O there's nae muckle sense needit for that; a breet beast kens fa's gweed till't."

"Aw widna grudge 'im a diet at a time like ither fouk," Mains would continue, "but aw'm seer he comes twice here for eence 'at he gangs to ony ither hoose i' the pairis, and bides langer fan he comes forbye."

"Weel, I wud far raither that than if he was to haud bye oor door, 'cause ither fouk ees't 'im better than we did."

"Aye but it's nae mowse haein 'im sae aften, for the craetur seems to hae nae meaths o's stammack. Aw've seen 'im ate mair at ae doon-sittin' than wud sair twa ordinary men for a haill day. Aw raelly think, 'oman, 'at ye sud tell 'im 'at we canna dee wi' 'im comin' sae aften."

"Na, na, I'll dee naething o' the kin'; there's aye been a bite an' sup in this hoose to a'body 'at com' till't, an' hoo sud it be itherwise noo, I wud like to ken?"

Of course, Mains himself could easily have taken a fitting opportunity of giving his troublesome visitor a hint that he must make his calls less frequent, but Mr. Buchan was a man that had many superstitious notions about him, and one idea of this kind was that it was "uncanny" to incur the displeasure of a "naitral" like Peter Milne.

IV.—About making the Tes'ment.

LIFE at Mains of Yonderton was not characterised by much variety, except that the different seasons of the year brought with them the duties and toils peculiar to each, but David Buchan and his wife were not troubled with longings for any sort of enjoyment beyond what domestic prosperity afforded them. The highest satisfaction that Mains himself could feel was to see a good crop on his fields and his cattle in a thriving state; and, truth to tell, he seldom had much cause to complain in these respects. For, if the crops in the district were fair, his would most probably be beyond the average; if they were generally bad, there would be many worse off than he was; and it was observed that during the five-and-twenty years that Mains and his wife were spared to each other, they enjoyed a wonderful immunity from death or disease among their cattle. In short, as things went, they were a thriving, prosperous couple, and the fortune which Mr. Buchan received with his wife was year by year augmented.

As they had no family, Mrs. Buchan often spoke to her husband during the later years of her life about making a will. "I'll tell ye fat ye'll dee man," she would say. "The neist time 'at ye see the factor ye'll speak till 'im about making some kin' o' a Sattlement, for we're baith turnin' ower to years noo, an' it wid be weel t' ha'e things in order in case onything micht happen t' ony o's, for that winna bring deeth an hour seener."

This was a subject that Mains had no pleasure in discussing while he was yet in the possession of health and vigour. He loved his money too well to have any complacency in the thought of making it over to another, even after he himself should be done with it, so he never entered very heartily into the proposal, and, as the best

way of avoiding action in the matter, he persisted in adhering to certain views on the subject, which he well knew were quite different from those which his wife had long entertained as to the destination of their property in the event of death overtaking one or both.

"Weel aw'm seer I dinna ken, 'oman," he would say; "I've been taul' 'at the factor mak's a most terrible chairge for ony job o' that kin'. Fat wad ye think o' tryin' the minister to de't? Aw suppose he's caupable aneuch o' deein' a' that's necessar. He wad tak naething for't eithern."

"Na, na, ilka man till his trade, as ma faader eest to say. Ministers may oonerstan' the gospel aifter a fashion, bit aw widna be dispos't t' lippen vera muckle t' their knowledge o' the law. Dinna ye min' siccan a wark as there wis about auld Jeames Thamson o' Loanheed's wull, 'at wis made oot by oor last minister, Maister Dronwearie?"

"Od, aw min' 'at there wis a terrible adee amo' the faimly aifter their faader's deeth, but aw cudna tell ye the particulars o't noo."

"Oh, bit I min' the rinnins o' the story brawly. The auldest sin did terrible ill, an' naar ruin't his father wi' caishonry. Syne, fan there wis naething mair to be gotten, he dis-appear't a'thegither, an' there wis for mony a lang day 'at his fowk didna ken whither he wis deid or livin'. Weel fan auld Loanie began to get frail he wentit to leave things in siccan a wye 'at the lave o' the faimly micht get a' 'at wis ower, an' hae nae tribble fae their auldest brither if ever he sud turn up again."

"Well that wis fair aneuch, for he hid likly gotten mair nor's share afore that time."

"Aye, twice ower they said. So Loanie he gangs owre bye t' Maister Dronwearie at the manse, an' gets a wull made, makin' ower a'thing to the fowk 'at wis at hame and cuttin' aff his neer-de-weel sin wi' a shillin',"

"An' sair't 'im richt," says Mains.

"Aye, sair't 'im richt, says ye, bit fat wis the upshot o' a' this noo? His faader's heid wisna weel happit till ma lad turns up again an' deman's his richts."

"Tye, tye," says Mains, "leave 'im aleen for that. If he thocht there wis onything a-gaen he widna be lang o' pittin in an appearance aw'll caishen 'im."

"They taul' 'im fat wye things wer' left, an 'at he had nae richts. But aff he gangs noo an' employs a lawyer, an' the first thing 'at he does is to deman' a sicht o' the wull. Weel, aw canna tell ye richt fat was the maitter wi't, but as seen's the lawyer saw't he leuch, an' said if that was a' 'at they had t' show it was nae wull ava', nae worth the paper it was written on."

"O aye, aw min' about that noo fan ye speak o't."

"Ye cudna but min' aboot it, for it's nae sae very mony years sin' it happen't, an' there was a terrible speakin' aboot it at the time. Weel, there was a law plae begun 'at gaed on for a twelvemonth an' mair, an' the short an' the lang o't was 'at the man gat his richts, as he ca'ad them, an' the lave gat naething — an' less than naething, if sic a thing cud be, for the lawyers nott a' 'at was ower an' a hantle mair for their expenses."

"Od that was seerly an ill manage't business a'-thegither o't. Only Maister Dronwearie was an auld man at that time, an' he was but a stupit eedle doddle kin o' a body at the best. Mr. Mair 'at's oor minister noo's a lang-heidit chiel; an' if we can tell 'im plainly fat we want, it's a queer thing if a man o' his edication canna pit it upo' black an' fite as plainly."

"Aye, ye wud think sae, but there's sae mony turns an' quirkes i' the law 'at a man's hardly safe t' meddle wi't 'cep it jist be his trade. So fan we get oor tes'ment made, for a signification o' a poun' note or twa, we'll jist get it deen b' the factor the richt gate."

"Weel Ise see about it some time, but fat kin' o' a sattlement wees ye thinkin' t' mak?"

"Ow Ise tell ye fat my ida-a wud be upon't. Of coorse it wud be t' oorsells twa in the first place, the langest liver t' brook a'. Syne, aifter we're baith deen wi't, I wud like something t' be leeft t' the peer o' the pairis, an' syne there's the laddie Paterson, an' maybe the laddie Johnston, 'at's been here sometimes fae Belhelvie, they micht baith be pitten doon for something tee; the lave I think sud gang to Frank Hepburn."

"The feck o't to Frank Hepburn!" exclaimed Mains in feigned astonishment. "Aw wonner t' hear ye, 'oman. Weel, that wud be fairly throwin't awa t' leave 't to him. My opingon o' yon laddie is 'at he'll jist be an unsattle't widdifu! He may hae gweed aneuch things aboot 'im; I sanna seek t' deny that, but he's aye sae idle an' thochtless, 'at I sair fear there'll never be muckle thrift wi' 'im; an' if at ony time he was gettin' a curn siller amon's hans, it micht drive 'im the black gate a'thegither."

"Preserve me, man, fat i' the wardle gars ye think that?"

"O ye ken weel aneuch 'at when he comes doon here i' the simmer time he's for nae eese ava. He cudna aiven be trustit to herd the kye for an oor or twa but he was sure to lat them in amo' the corn, an' fan I wud hae gaen oot ower t' turn them on o' the leys again, he wud hae been amusin' himsell wi' makin' bits o' shippies an' soomin' them i' the burn, or he wud hae been aff at the wood speilin' up the trees like a monkey, an' never leukin' the wye o' the beasts, but jist latten them wan'er ony wye 'at they liket."

Thus far of the will-making. We must next introduce some of the prospective legatees in a more formal way.

V.—Tam Paterson and Frank Hepburn.

THE description of Frank Hepburn, given by David Buchan, was but too true, and, while Mrs. Buchan gave a good-humoured laugh, as it was now and again repeated, she would answer—"But tho' the laddie disna incline ferm wark, that's nae to say that he'll never dee ony gweed at some ither thing. Na, na, lat Frank Hepburn till a thing 'at he his a notion o', an' I'm sair chaetit if he disna dee better than mony. I dinna ken richtly foo it is, but some wye or ither I hae a heep mair depen'ance on him than I hae on Tam Paterson."

"Noo there ye are again. Od, 'oman, aw never saw the like o' ye. Ye're aye sae contermacious on this subjec', 'at aw doot we'll never come to be o' ae wye o' thinkin' aboot it. Aw'm seer ye've nae rizzen for fat ye say. It's jist a wheem 'at ye've teen in yer heid. I think, noo, 'at Tam Paterson's wirth twa o' Frank Hepburn. I'se aseer ye Tam's a coushus, sensible chap. Od, I min' fine ae time 'at he wis here fan he wis jist a bit laddie; he wis gaen aboot wi' me amo' the byres, an' he jist newst like an auld man aboot fat this beast micht be worth, an' fat this ither ane micht sell for—my hert jist a kin' o' warm't to the laddie. Ise aseer ye yon lad has a turn for buzzness, an' it's my honest belief 'at, if he's spare't, he'll be worth a hantle mair siller than ony o's yet."

Then with quiet sarcasm Mrs. Buchan would say—"O weel, if that's to be the wye o't, the bit clossach 'at we may leave a'hins at oor deeth winna be worth his while."

Thus, though the subject was frequently stirred by Mrs. Buchan, the discussion of it had always ended

unsatisfactorily, and she ultimately died without any settlement having been made, so that, in the end, Mains was left in the undisturbed possession of his money, with none to interfere with or control him in the spending of it.

Mains himself had no relatives except very distant, and such as he hardly knew and had no interest in whatever. His wife's relatives were two cousins, daughters of her father's only brother. Jean, the eldest, was married to a man of the name of Paterson, a cattle dealer, who resided near Peterhead. Mary, the second daughter, became the wife of one James Hepburn, a small farmer in Belhelvie. James Hepburn and his wife, and also Mrs. Paterson, predeceased Mrs. Buchan of Mains of Yonderton, but Mrs. Paterson and Mrs. Hepburn each left one son, the Tam Paterson and the Frank Hepburn referred to in various conversations like those of which we have given a sample.

The laddie Johnston, mentioned by Mrs. Buchan, was Patrick Johnston, the son of a most respectable widow residing in the parish of Belhelvie, with whom Frank Hepburn had lived since the death of his parents. Mrs. Johnston's maiden name was Margaret Hepburn; she was Frank Hepburn's aunt, being a sister of James Hepburn, his father, and Patrick Johnston and Frank Hepburn were thus full cousins.

As these youths figure somewhat prominently in the subsequent chapters of our story, the reader should know something more of their character and early history.

Frank Hepburn was a youth who possessed many excellent qualities. He was of a kind and generous disposition. There was no duplicity or cunning in his nature, and his face was a true index of his mind, for no one could look into his bright eyes and open countenance without being convinced that the lad had a kind heart, and that he was open and truthful. He was also brave and fearless, and seemed to court danger rather than

avoid it. There was, too, an absence of that selfishness which is so often to be met with in mankind, both old and young. As a boy he was generous almost to a fault, for he could not thoroughly enjoy any good thing until he had shared it liberally with his companions. With Mrs. Buchan, as indicated, he had been a special favourite, and she had often expressed a wish that he should make his home at Mains of Yonderton, no doubt with the view of his ultimately succeeding to the farm, and what money she and her husband had saved, which was well known to be a large sum for people in their position, and there were those who said that Hepburn acted very stupidly for his own interest in not availing himself of an offer likely to be fraught with so much advantage, but he was not of a calculating turn of mind, and the prospects which such an arrangement held out had no attraction for him. Nevertheless he usually spent a month or six weeks every summer at the Mains, until he left his home to make his way in the world, and on these occasions his cousin and foster brother, Patrick Johnston, sometimes accompanied him. But David Buchan had no particular favour for Frank Hepburn. The outstanding features of his character were such as a person of Mains's habits and mode of life could scarcely understand or appreciate. Moreover, a person, be he old or young, who took no interest in crops or cattle and the prices thereof, was looked upon by Mains as of no account whatever; and, as Hepburn's tastes lay in an entirely different direction, it need not be wondered at that Mains had been often heard to remark that he hardly ever saw a laddie but what he cud hae made something o', unless it was Frank Hepburn, but he fairly blaiket 'im, that he micht mak oot t' pick up a kin' o' livin' at something; but there wis ae thing he wis weel sure o', it widna be fairmin'. "It's a' vera weel," he would add, "for fowk t' tell me 'at he his this gweed property an'

the ither gweed property about 'im, but are they properties 'at 'll help 'im t' push his wye i' the wordle; if they're nae that aw widna gie a pinch o' snuff for them."

Hepburn's ignorance of, and want of interest in, rural affairs, arose from the fact that he had, while yet but a mere boy, made up his mind to be a sailor, and nothing could induce him to change this resolution.

In character and disposition Frank Hepburn and Patrick Johnston were very similar; they were also about the same age, and a strong attachment existed between them. An uncle of Mrs. Johnston's lived with her, who was between 70 and 80 years of age. He was an "old salt," who, during his long life afloat, had been in every quarter of the globe, and the two boys had no greater pleasure than to listen to stories of his adventures, on which, as an "ancient mariner" of the old familiar type, he fondly loved to dwell. Their humble residence in Belhelvie was not more than half a mile from the coast, and, as the blue waters of the ocean were constantly in view, they seemed to take to the sea as their natural and proper element. From the old man's observations on passing vessels, they had come to know the names of the different masts and sails, and could tell, at a great distance, whether a vessel was a sloop or a schooner, a brig or a barque. The boys spent a great part of their time in wandering along the beach, indulging in day-dreams as to the future. In storm they delighted to watch the crested waves rolling in towards the shore and breaking on the sandy beach or rocky headland. When the weather was calm and mild, bathing was a favourite exercise, and both became very proficient in the art of swimming.

As may be supposed, Mrs. Johnston did not look with much favour on the passion for the sea which the two boys manifested, and sometimes when she saw the

eagerness with which they listened as the old sailor spun his yarns, she would say, "Weel, uncle, ye dinna ken the ill 'at ye're deein' fillin' that laddies' heeds wi' stories o' that kine, garrin them believe 'at a sailor's life's sae happy and free, fan aw'm seere aw've heard ye say yersell, ower an' ower again, 'at it's fu' o' hardships, an' that if ye had ye're days t' begin again ye wid rayther be onything afore ye wid gang t' the sea."

"Weel, that's perfectly true," he would say, "but hoo can I help it? The laddies like t' hear the stories, an' I jist tell them; but, if they tak' my advice, they'll be content wi' *that*, for there's nae life mair beset wi' toils an' dangers than the life o' a seafarin' man."

But young and ardent minds like theirs are rather attracted by danger than repelled by it. At all events, the old man's stories had a more powerful influence upon them than his advice; and the result, as already stated, was that the boys would be sailors and nothing else.

"The laddie Paterson," as he was usually called by Mrs. Buchan, was a youth of a totally different stamp from the two we have been describing, for, though he and Frank Hepburn were sisters' sons, it would be difficult to conceive of two characters or dispositions so entirely different. In every aspect in which they could be looked at, the one was the complete antithesis of the other. Young Paterson's father was one of those sly, canny going customers who, by dint of over-reaching and economy, had managed to make a little money by dealing or "couping" among cattle, though only on a limited scale; but the son, although he inherited all the father's greed, unfortunately had none of the old man's capacity for turning an honest penny, and yet he talked as if he would do great things in the way of making a fortune as soon as he got the chance. The truth is, young Paterson was a fool, though, like many more fools in the world, he thought himself a very clever fellow.

Even as a boy, he was mean, selfish and deceitful in an eminent degree. He had also the abominable habit of tyrannising over and abusing such as were younger and weaker than himself; but if any spirited youth happened to "show fight," it at once became evident that the bully was a coward. This was clearly shown by a little incident that happened between the cousins when, as boys, they chanced to be at the Mains together during the summer holidays. Hepburn had, with considerable labour, and no little skill, constructed a miniature ship, which he had fitted with masts, yards and sails, after the cut and rig of a regular sea-going schooner, and it was a favourite amusement of his to sail this little craft on a sheet of water in the moss, from whence the Mains and other farms on the same property had their annual supply of peats. By an ingenious arrangement of the rudder and sails, he could make the little thing advance in any direction he chose; he could even cause it to make headway in a contrary direction to that from which the wind was blowing, and so fond was he of this pastime that he would have pursued it sometimes for hours together. One fine summer day he was thus occupied, and Tam Paterson was idly looking on, while a humorous kind of a fellow who was "orra man" at the Mains, Jock Hoolesson by name, was busy with his spade in the peat-bank hard by. It was an amusement in which Tam took little interest, and he began to get tired of looking on merely and doing nothing, so he said to Hepburn, in a rather authoritative tone, "Ye've wrocht lang aneuch wi' that stupit thing noo; come awa o'er t' the ither side o' the moss an' aw'll let ye see a livrock's nest 'at I fan' the ither day, wi' four young eens in't."

"O, I'm nae carein' for't," said Hepburn, "we're better here; bide see till she comes t' the side again, an' I'll lat ye see 'er gaen against the win' as fine's ye like."

"Tchah! it's nae worth lookin' at; come awa, aw tell ye, or aw'll *gar* ye dee't."

"I tell ye I'm nae comin' enoo," said Hepburn, somewhat nettled at this style of address. "If ye're tire't ye can gang awa' yersel'—there's naebody seekin' ye t' bide here langer than ye like."

At this time Hepburn's back was to him, for he was intently watching the motions of his "shippie," and because Hepburn had refused to humour him, Tam, quite unobserved by the other, lifted a large stone and hurled it at the little craft, on which it alighted with such fatal precision that it sank it to the bottom, and when it rose to the surface again the tiny masts and sails were in an awfully shattered condition, and the hull lay on its side a complete wreck on the surface of the water.

Tam was three years older than Frank Hepburn, and altogether of a heavier build, but Hepburn was hasty in his temper and quick in his movements, and no sooner did he witness the destruction to his "shippie," the making of which had cost him so much trouble, than he rushed upon Tam and proceeded to pitch into him in such a vigorous and scientific manner, that poor Tam had neither the opportunity nor the pluck to return a single blow, while Jock Hooieson, with whom it need scarcely be said Tam was no favourite, suspended his peat casting, and called out, "Weel deen, Frankie! Od ye're a keen chap; haud at 'im, min! Od that's capital! Serves him richt, the muckle sumph 'at he is."

Tam soon found that there was no help but to run for it, which he did, with bloody nose and swollen countenance, and blubbering impotent threats of future vengeance. When he reached the house he was not ashamed to tell Mrs. Buchan that Frank Hepburn had "lickit 'im," and that Jock Hooieson had "eikit 'im up till't"; but, to his disappointment, he found that she expressed no more sympathy for him under the chastise-

ment he had received than the orra man had done. "I've nae doot," she said, "but ye richly deserved a' 'at ye've gotten; and if ye wisna a muckle saft lump, ye wid think shame t' tell onybody 'at ye hid latten a laddie like Frank Hepburn lick ye."

From that day forth Tam Paterson entertained a rooted dislike to Frank Hepburn, but the latter did not think it worth his while to cherish any feeling of hatred towards Tam, though he could hardly fail to despise him.

VI.—Mrs. Buchan's Death—Jock Hooieson's Project for Breaking up the Lyke-wake.

Mrs. Buchan died in the month of February, 1806. For nearly two years before her death she was quite an invalid, and the doctor who attended her could only prescribe nourishing food and port wine in order to keep up her strength. The long-continued use of such dainties no doubt involved a good deal of outlay; and there was some who asserted that Mains actually grudged the expense which necessarily attended his wife's protracted illness. If a sympathising neighbour enquired at him how she was keeping, his usual answer would be, "O, weel, she's makin' naething o't. Aw railly cudna say 'at she's ony better or ony waur. She's hed a lang, dowie time o't; an' fu lang it may lest yet there's naebody can tell."

"I believe she has nae pain t' speak o'?"

"Weel, no, she disna compleen o' onything in partickler, but she's jist as wake an' fushionless as a bairn; an' for a' the *expensive* things 'at she gets t' stren'then 'er, they dinna seem t' dee 'er ony gweed."

Then with an ill-suppressed smile, as if he saw where the shoe was pinching, the enquirer would probably say, "Weel Mains, but ye sud be thankfu' 'at she's able t' tak' onything ava, fatever it may cost, for, if she wisna that, I fear ye wid seen lose 'er a' thegither."

"Aweel, so a'body tells me, bit she's aye haill at the hert, an' able t' tak' ony bit cherricock at the doctor orders. It's a sair case I'se asseer ye. A' signs o' lang life an' ill health."

The reader, however, must not infer from this way of speaking that Mains had no affection for his wife. On the contrary he liked her as well as a man of his turn of mind was capable of doing, and would have made almost any sacrifice if it would have restored her to health and strength; but his nature was such that he could not see his money spent for any purpose whatever without feeling it.

But the end did come. Mrs. Buchan "wore awa," and poor Mains was left a lone man, with nobody to care for or comfort him. It is true he was now worth a good deal of money, but we say "Poor Mains" for all that, for what is money to a man who cannot feel in his heart to use it?

In those days, what was termed a "lyke," or "late wake," was generally observed when a death took place in a household; that is to say, it was customary for some of the friends of the deceased, or near neighbours, by way of showing their respect for the dead and their sympathy for the bereaved family, to sit in the room where the corpse was laid out, not only during the day but throughout the greater part of the night as well. The intention of this custom in earlier times no doubt was that the solemn event might be improved to the survivors by having their minds more deeply impressed with a sense of their own mortality, and the time was accordingly spent in reading portions of the Scriptures and other religious services; but long before lyke-wakes had ceased to be commonly observed, they had degenerated so far as, in too many cases, to become mere occasions for gossiping and for eating and drinking.

At Mrs. Buchan's lyke-wake a rather uncouth and heartless joke was played off upon poor old Mains, which, as faithful narrators, it is our duty to record here. As already stated, he was somewhat superstitious, and

was just the sort of person to be easily imposed upon by any story of ghost or hobgoblin, however absurd or ridiculous it might be. Jock Hooieson, the "orra man," was a shrewd, waggish, sort of a fellow in his own way. He had been several years at the Mains, for at that time farm servants were in the habit of staying much longer in one place than they do now. Jock thoroughly understood his master's peculiarities, and had, on more than one occasion previously, taken advantage of his credulity in the region of the supernatural, merely for the amusement that it afforded to himself and whoever else might happen to be in the secret, though they always took good care that Mains himself should never come to know that he had been hoaxed.

Jock had sat the greater part of the first night with the company that were convened in the room where the body was lying, and having observed on that occasion that Mains did not seem in the least cast down about the loss of his wife, but that, in fact, he appeared to be more jocose and cheerful than his usual, and that an ill-concealed levity was at times noticeable in the whole company — no uncommon circumstances on such occasions—he was convinced of the hollowness and insincerity of the whole business, and he conceived the wicked idea of breaking up the unseemly gathering by giving them such a "fleg" as, he was sure, would make them very quickly clear out of the apartment.

Next day in the dinner hour he fell to discussing matters in the "chaumer" with Willie Eddie, the "coo baillie," a youth or hafflin about eighteen years of age, who had also been present. "Weel, Willie," he said, "fat did ye think o' yon affair the streen?"

"Nae vera muckle o't," said Willie; "fat thocht ye o't?"

"I thocht," said Jock, "'at aw had never seen a greater farce in a' ma born days. Insteid o' yon

showin' respeck for the deed, it wis raither an insult t' them."

"Aw dinna think 'at the maister's vera sorry aboot 'er, div ye?"

"O, aw daursay he's a kin' o' sorry in his ain wye, bit, man, his heart's sae sair glue't tae the wordle 'at there's naething pits 'im vera muckle aboot, less it be onything 'at touches his pooch."

"I'se warren he'll miss 'er, though."

"Aye, we'll a' miss 'er, for she teuk her nain wye in managin' the hoose, an' gae's aye a gweed diet in spite o' Mains and his mean wyes, bit noo 'at she's awa, there'll be naething bit hunger an' meesery t' be leuked for i' the mate wye."

"Weel, weel, if that's t' be the wye o't, we'll jist need t' mak' it term day fan Wutsunday comes."

They then relapsed into silence for a minute or so. Jock Hooieson seemed to be revolving something in his mind that was affording him some amusement, and then he cried:—

"Aw say, min, I wis thinkin' fan we waur sittin' yon'er the streen, 'at we micht dee waur than pit an en' t' yon nonsense. It cud easy be deen. Auld Mains is terrible easy frichtent, an' as for the fouk 'at come in aboot, there'll be nae diffickwelty in gien them siccan a scare 'at there winna ane o' them seek t' come back here bit in braid daylicht ere the auld 'oman's heid be happit. Bit it wad need 's baith t' mak' a richt job o't. Fat d' ye say, min?"

"Aw dinna ken fu weel it wid leuk for his t' be kickin' up ony cantrips enoo, but lat's hear fat ye wiz proposin' to dee."

"Weel, aw'll tell ye," said Jock, "ye'll mak' a pretence 'at ye hiv to gang fae hame the nicht, an' 'at ye canna be at the wake. Syne ye'll come in bye, say aboot alaiven o'clock, an' come in t' the hoose as quate's

ye can, tak' aff ye're beets at the door an' gang up the stair t' the place abeen far we're sittin'. Better tak' ye're beets up wi' ye in ye're han' for fear ony body micht fa' owre them i' the dark, as that wid lat the cat out o' the pyock. Ye can easy manage t' dee a' that without onybody hearin' ye. Syne ye'll listen for twall o'clock, an' as seen's it's deen chappin', ye'll gie a lood screetch, the mair unearthly like the better, an', at the same time, gie three lood knocks on the fleer richt abeen the coffin. That's a' 'at ye'll hae t' dee; aw'll manage the lave mysel."

"Aye, aye," said Willie, "that's a' vera weel, bit I maun ken a' aboot it afore aw'll say 'at aw'll hae onything t' dee wi't. Lat's hear, noo, fat it is 'at ye're gaen t' dee."

"Aw'll seen dee that," said Jock. "Of coorse aw'll be sittin' wi' the lave, an' a' 'at I intend t' dee is t' fasten the tail o' the maister's coat 't yon muckle nail i' the wa' at the cheek o' the fire aside the cheer 'at he aye sits in, an' contrive t' ca' owre the caunle, or at ony rate pit oot the licht some wye or ither at the richt time; syne fin a' the lave rins oot o' the hoose, as they're sure t' dee faist aneuch, the auld boy 'll fin' 'imsell reistit i' the spot, an' winna he be in a terrible takin'?"

The propounding of this plot made them both laugh heartily. Willie Eddie was quite willing to perform the part that was assigned to him, and it was agreed to carry it out that same evening.

VII.—The Project is a Success.

Evening came, and again there was a considerable number of persons present in the chamber of death. Jock Hooieson was there, but Willie Eddie was absent. Mains sat in his own big chair—it would have been a misnomer to call it an "easy" chair, for it was an uncouth-looking thing, with a straight-up high back, and could not have been very comfortable to sit in. The back of it was surmounted by brackets which projected inwards on each side of Mains's head, reminding one very forcibly of the "blinders" on a horse's bridle. He sat with his back to the corner where the body lay, and Jock Hooieson sat immediately behind him, and close to the coffin. The usual oil lamp was discarded at such a solemn time, a candle being thought more in keeping with the occasion, and this candle was set at the head of the corpse. The apartment was warm, and the fire was kept low in consequence. Mains had made one or two calls that afternoon in connection with the funeral arrangements, and wore his Sunday coat, which was a substantial looking garment of the swallow-tail order. He had called at the Manse and at the bellman's house in the kirktoon, and that was next door to the inn. These calls might probably account for his now looking as if he had been "tasting," for, as may be supposed, he was a very temperate man, and little "took on 'im."

The evening passed away as was usual on such occasions. The conversation was chiefly about what was going on in the district; only there was an occasional "aye, aye," or "weel weel," uttered in a serious drawling tone, as if to remind the company that they were

in the presence of death, and not assembled on the occasion of a marriage or a baptism. Mains himself was particularly "crackie" that evening, and his example seemed to have infected the others. By way of an "exercise," he read a chapter of the Bible and one of the Psalms in metre, after which bread and cheese and good "hame brewed" ale were handed round, to which all present did ample justice. It was now drawing near to twelve o'clock, and Jock Hooieson had already succeeded —all unknown to Mains or any other body—in fastening the tail of that worthy man's coat to the "muckle nail" before referred to, by means of a piece of very strong cord, with which he had taken care to provide himself. The secureness of the fastening was put beyond all doubt from the fact that Mains's worsted "gravet" and hummel mittens happened to be in the tail pocket, and as Jock took care to tie the cord round the tail of his coat, *above* the contents of the pockets, these formed a bulky substance, over which it was impossible for the cord to slip.

"That's a drap o' as gweed ale as aw've tastit this mony a lang day," said one. "There's some substance there, for aw fin't garren ma lips stick thegither."

"Aye," said Mains, "that was ane o' the things 'at *she* aye insistit on. She beet aye t' hae a drap gweed ale i' the hoose, come o' a' ither thing at liket. Mony a bit stashie I eest t' hae wi' 'er about the maut, for it was aye deen, an' aye deen, but it was nae eese. 'Hoot awa man,' she wid say, 'aw wonner t' hear ye makin' sic a wark aboot a puckle maut—i' ma fadder's day we wid hae thocht naething o' makin' as muckle again at ony time.' "

"Ah," said an ancient-looking dame who was one of the company, "she was a gweed wife t' ye Mains, a gweed wife I'se asseer ye; an' peer body, she hed a lang, sair time o't afore she was teen awa."

"Ow, aye," said Mains, "she warstl't a lang time wi' 'er complaint, but ye see it got the better o' 'er at last, only it's a' ower noo. She winna come back t' his, bit we maun a' gang t' her.

"Od sake hoo the time flees," said another, "there it's just on the stroke o' twall already, aw hid nae idaa 'at it was sae lang i' the nicht."

"Twall o'clock," said Jock Hooieson, in a solemn tone of voice, "that's the witchin' hoor fan trouble't ghosts 'at may be wanderin' aboot are sure t' show themsells."

"Jock," said Mains, turning sharply round on him with a frightened look, "aw'm astonish't 'at ye hinna mair sense aboot ye than t' speak that gate enoo min. If ye hae nae feelins o' ye're ain, ye micht hae some respeck for ither fowk's, aw think."

The hour had now begun to strike—Jock Hooieson started to his feet, and, looking intently as if he saw something strange at the opposite side of the room, he exclaimed, "Fat's that!"

Of course all eyes were immediately turned away in the direction indicated, while, unobserved by any one, he adroitly extinguished the candle by pressing the "wick" between his finger and thumb, and the company found themselves in total darkness. Before any one had time to remark upon this awkward occurrence, an unearthly yell was heard overhead, followed immediately by three tremendous knocks, and the alarm of the whole company was beyond description. The women screamed, the men cried "Gweed preserve's!" and in a moment afterwards there was a crowd of persons struggling together at the door of the apartment and in the narrow lobby, trying who should be the first to escape into the open air.

No doubt, the master of the house would have been the foremost man in this stampede, but he, poor man,

found, on starting to run, that some unseen agency kept pulling him back by the tail of his coat. Mains "ruggit and tuggit," but it was no use. Cloth could stand a good "rug" in those days, for there was no rotten shoddy used in its manufacture as there is now. He had not the presence of mind to get out of the coat and leave it behind him, and he was so frightened that he would not have looked round nor put out his hand to feel what was restraining him for all he was worth. In the midst of this confusion Willie Eddie found no difficulty whatever in descending from his place of concealment, and getting out of the house unobserved by anybody.

It was not till all had got safely outside that it was discovered that poor Mains was a prisoner in the house, being attracted by his piteous cries for somebody to come to his assistance. "Ye're a' awa," he cried, "an' leeft me i' the grip—there's some infernal pooer ta'en a haud o' me! O, for gweed sake, come back some o' ye an' see if ye can tak' me oot o' this."

Nobody volunteered to go in immediately, and his cries for help became more vehement. "Oh!" he cried, "aw'm chockin'! aw'll be murder't! if ye dinna come t' ma, aw'll be carriet awa' bodily till anither wordle. O, dear! O, dear! fat 'ill come o' me?"

As the joke had now been carried as far as had been intended, Jock Hooieson, with an apparent disregard for his own safety, which gained him the good opinion of all, boldly declared his intention of going to his master's assistance. "Though the deevil 'imsell should be i' the house," he said, "it'll never dee ava t' leave the maister in this predickiment without, at least, makin' *an attemp'* t' relieve 'im, an' if there's neen o' ye has the pluck t' gang wi' ma, aw maun jist gang in ma leen."

Nobody showed any inclination to accompany him, and he accordingly went in by himself.

"Fat's this 'at's come o'er yee noo, Mains?" he said.

"Oh, Jock, man, is that you. Man, aw dinna ken fat it is, aw doot its something nae verra canny; bit, be fat it likes, it takes a firm grip."

Jock pretended to mutter something as if to exorcise the ghost. Then he cut the knot which his own hands had tied, and Mains was out of the room as fast as his feet could carry him. Jock then took the cord from the nail, put it into his pocket, and walked out after him; and so well was the secret kept, that from that day to this nobody ever knew the real facts of this affair except the two individuals who were directly concerned in planning and carrying out the trick. Jock Hooieson was often asked whether he saw anything "uncanny" when he went into the house to his master's assistance, but he always assumed a mysterious air, and said, "That was a subject 'at he wid raither nae say onything aboot."

After this occurrence nobody entered the room till after the funeral, except when it was broad daylight. Mains himself preferred sleeping in the men's "chaumer" for a time, and, instead of Jock Hooieson being suspected as the author of a practical joke, the bold and fearless manner in which he went to his master's assistance in the time of his extremity raised him so far in that worthy man's estimation that, when he paid him his half-year's wages at the following Whitsunday term, he actually gave him half-a-crown more than the stipulated fee, which was certainly a most unwonted piece of generosity on his part.

VIII.—Tam Paterson commences Business.

A FEW years before the incidents narrated in the last chapter took place, Tam Paterson had been apprenticed to one David Rettie, a general merchant in Peterhead; and on the death of old Paterson, which took place soon after that of Mrs. Buchan, Tam succeeded to a small sum of money, which enabled him to commence business on his own account, in the same town, under circumstances which, with care and good management, might have ensured success. Like many of our most successful men, the master with whom he had served his apprenticeship had begun business on a very small scale, but had gradually extended his connection as he saw his way to do so, till, at length, he had the satisfaction of attaining to a position, not indeed, of great wealth, but of comfort and independence. But an exalted genius, such as Tam Paterson believed himself to be, could hardly have been expected to see the propriety of this mode of procedure. The truth contained in the old proverb, which says "we maun creep afore we gang," might have been all very well for timid kind of people, and people of but ordinary business capacity, but it did not apply to Tam Paterson, and so he began business on a scale that made some folk remark, in their plain homely way, that he was "gaen t' cairry a'thing afore 'im." He had not the sound sense to begin by setting his foot on the lower rounds of the ladder of fortune, and climbing up slowly, but no less surely. *His* plan was to begin at a considerable elevation and go higher still, though sensible people might think he was just as likely to reverse the process and descend to

the bottom. As his selfish nature made him quick enough to discover whatever he believed might be for his advantage, he thought it advisable to keep on intimate terms with David Buchan of the Mains, and even to put himself to some trouble that he might get as far as possible into his good graces. Mains was now between fifty and sixty years of age, and, being without family or relatives, it did not require any great stretch of the imagination to conceive it possible, and even probable, that, if he managed discreetly, he had a good chance of succeeding to the old man's fortune, which was known to be of considerable amount. Acting from this motive, he made it a point to visit Mains of Yonderton occasionally, just to make sure that his old friend did not forget him. He well knew that the surest passport to his favour was to represent himself as getting into a large business and being in a fair way to become a rich man at no very distant date, and it was really amusing to observe how he aimed at producing impressions that he reckoned would be for his advantage, while at the same time his conversation gave evidence that he was full of conceit, and utterly destitute of the qualifications that are usually found to characterise those who have proved themselves to be successful business men.

"Is trade ony brisk wi' ye enoo?" was what might have been called a stock question of Mains's on the occasion of Tam Paterson's visits.

"O, I've nae rizzon t' compleen ava," Tam would say. "I hear some fouk sayin' 'at things are gey dull wi' *them,* bit I never want plenty t' dee."

"O, ye'll be weel liket than; it's a braw thing for a man 'at apens a chop fin he gets the fawvors o' the public."

"Well, I dinna ken if it's jist that a'thegeither; bit I keep a heap bigger a stock o' things than ony o' the ither merchans i' the toon. Ye see, they're a' in a sma'

wye compar't wi' me; an' I'm sure I dee as muckle bizzness as ony twa o' them pitten' thegether."

"D'ye say so? Od man, aw'm richt gled t' hear that; bit aw doot the ither merchans winna be weel pleast at ye for takin' awa their customers. They'll be awears o' gettin' jealous o' ye."

"O, I ken fine they're that. Nae 'at ever they said onything t' me, bit I've been taul' 'at fu some o' them had been sayin' 'at they dootit I wis beginnin' wi' o'er great a palaver at first, an' 'at I hid better see 'at I didna gang ahead o'er fest an' come doon wi' a rummle some day; bit they're jist mad t' see me deein' sic a lairge bizzness, and them deein' little or naething sometimes."

"Weel, aw'm rael gled t' hear 'at ye're like t' get on sae weel. Ye'll maybe be a creidit till's a' yet, Tam. Aw've seen as muckle's ye may be worth as muckle siller some day as auld Davie Rettie 'at ye sair't ye're time wi'."

A contemptuous "Teuch!" was Tam's answer to this observation, and then he added—"that wid be naething t' brag aboot. Iv I dinna mak' mair o't than he's deen, I widna think it worth ma while t' begin. Nae doot he made a gweed curn siller or a' wis deen, bit he wis a lang time aboot it. I expec' t' mak' my fortin' an' retire lang afore I'm his age!"

"Weel, Tam, aw'm seer aw wuss it may be sae, bit aw ey oonersteed 'at Davie Rettie wiz a gweed bizzness man, an' a man 'at cud be depennit on for his honesty, especially fan he wiz buyin' onything fae fairmer bodies like masell."

"Ay, buyin' onything," said Tam. "It wiz jist there 'at he wiz deficient. For instance, noo, fin I wiz wi' 'im he eest t' buy lots o' butter an' cheese fae the fairmers' wives roon aboot, an' ye railly widna believe hoo simple he wiz wi' them. I'm safe to say 'at if he hid leeft that pairt o' the bizzness to me, I cud mony a

time hae bocht them a penny the pu'n chaiper than he did."

"Yea, man; fat wye wiz that?"

"O weel, ye see, he hid some auld-fashin't notions aboot 'im aboot 'livin' an' lattin' live,' an' 'deein' as we wid be deen till,' 'at it wiz nae eese speakin' till 'im."

"Weel," Mains would say, "I hold 'at there's nae eese for ony considerations o' that kine. In makin' a bargain it sud jist be ilka man for himsell, an' if fouk canna leuk aifter their nain interest, od they deserve to be chaitet."

"That's *my* opingon, Mains; that's *ey* been my principle, an' I'm gled 'at ye agree wi' me; for on onything conneckit wi' buyin' an' sellin' there's naebody's opingon 'at I wid hae mair respec' for than yer ain." And then followed some judicious flattery to the same effect—not laid on too thickly, because Mains would not have liked that, but just administered in sufficient quantity to be agreeable.

A little flattered perhaps by this testimony to his shrewd business capacity, Mains continued, "Aw'll tell ye ae thing 'at I ey like t' study whether aw be t' buy or t' sell, an' that is the canniest time for bringin' stuff in t' the market. In short, aw try as far as aw can t' buy in a fu' market, an' sell in a teem een."

"I daursay that's a safe ruel to follow in a' kine of business."

"O, aw suppose so, but especially in oor line. There's jist the ither day I had roon een o' yer Peterheed merchans wintin' t' buy aits fae me. He wis offerin' sax-an-twoonty shillin's the bow, bit I taul 'im aw widna dispose o' my crap enoo on ony conditions."

"That wis a fair aneuch price, wisna 't?"

"O, aw daursay it wis jist as gweed's agaen, bit it's nae a wise thing t' sell at this time o' the year, fatever they be offerin'."

"What wye isna' the time o' year shootable?"

"O weel, ye see, it only wints aboot three weeks t' the Mairtimas term, an' aboot this time the market's generally sae weel stockit 'at prices are ey compairatively low, an' on the doon-gaen han'. Gin twa month or so aifter this there winna be muckle comin' forrat, an' aw've seen as muckle's I may get thirty shillin's for mine yet."

"An' hoo d'ye accoont for the market bein' sae weel supplied at this time o' the year?"

"Naething mair easy; the rent time's comin' on, ye see, an' ither payments hiv' t' be made at the term; fouk maun hae siller, and t' get the siller they maun sell their stuff, an' that wye the man 'at hisna mony spare bawbees t' turn his han' wi' is ey at a disadvantage; or sellin' grain at the wrang time is jist as profitless as cuttin' 't afore it be ripe."

"Weel, Mains," says Tam, "ye're railly a wonnerfu' man. The like o' you for kennin hoo t' dee a thing, an' *fan* t' dee't, I never saw. An', ae man, isna't a gran' thing 'at ye can affoord t' bide ye're time that wye. Ye're nae needin' t' sell an unce o' yer crap till it suits yersell. Ye can jist lock yer barn doors an' refeese t' open them till the corn comes t' be that scarce i' the countra 'at fouk's gled t' get a puckle at ony price."

"Od, that remark o' yours," said Mains, "brings to my min' a bit pilgit 'at I had wi' the gweedwife mony a' year an' day syne, or it wis jist shortly aifter we waur marriet. It wis in the year eighty-twa,* iv I min' weel, fin there wis a terrable scarcity o' corn, an' a lot o' fouk had t' keep in their life wi' pease meal an sic' like; bit the crap on the Mains wisna jist sae feerious bad as it wis mony roads, an' I wis fortinate in haein' a gweed curn bows o' aul' corn besides. Weel, I thocht it wid be better nae t' be in ony hurry pitten't awa', as it wis risin' in

*Reference to this period will be found in the Appendix.

value ilka day, bit she wid'na hear o' keepin't up, an' said 'at her faader wid hae never deen onything sae hertless; 'at aw micht be fear't 'at aw wid ken yet fat it wis t' wint breed an' nae neen t' tak', an' got on at siccan a rate 'at I wis near fear't at 'er; jist as if tryin' t' get the best price 'at we could for fat we had t' sell wis naething less than a cryin' sin."

"Aye," says Tam, "that's jist like the women fouk; they winna rizzon wi' a body, an' they canna calculat'; it's a' be their *feelin's* 'at they work, an' that wey they're ey takin' some silly wheem or ither in t' their heeds."

"Weel but though she wis nae han' at makin' a bargain," said Mains, "she had a hantle o' gweed properties aboot 'er for a' that, only she wis terrable feelin' hertit, an' that made her simple an' easy impos't upon."

"Aye, iv she hidna been that my cousin Hepburn wid hae never gotten roon 'er the wye 'at he did; he kent her waik side brawly, for he wis a sleekit, two-face't monkey; bit I wis ey gled t' see 'at ye hid mair sense than be teen in wi' 'im."

But Mains was not so blind to the true state of the case as not to know that this was a most unjust reflection on Hepburn, whose open and candid disposition he was well aware of, and he answered somewhat dryly, "Aw hardly think 'at Frank Hepburn ever pat 'imsel' muckle aboot to gain onybody's fawvors. Fat we saw o' him wis jist the naitrel ootcome, an' his carelessness aboot fat micht be for his ain interest wis jist the thing t' tak' the mistress's fancy. I had nae dislike t' the laddie mysel', only 'at aw thocht 'im an unsattl't craetur, 'at there wid never be muckle thrift wi', and the wye 'at ye ey had o' leukin' afore ye, an' fat wis for yer advantage pleas't me better."

Before he could be said to be well established in business, Tam Paterson took to himself a wife, and,

strange to say, for *once*, he did not seem to be actuated by any mercenary motive, for, beyond a decent "providing," the lady whom he resolved to elevate to the rank of being his better-half, was not possessed of any money. We must take leave to explain, however, that the absence of selfishness in uniting his fortunes to a penniless girl was more apparent than real. The fact was that he had been somewhat fascinated with her good looks, which led to his paying her some attentions, and spending a good deal of his spare time in her society, but he had never seriously thought of marriage with her or any other body at that time. By and by, however, he found out that he had gone too far, and though he would willingly have backed out of the affair when it began to look serious on her side, he was given distinctly to understand that the young lady's feelings were not to be trifled with in that manner, and he agreed to marry her simply because he had good reason to suspect it would be a more serious business for him if he didn't.

When Tam first announced to Mains that he intended to get married, he entered into a pretty full description of what he believed to be the superior qualities, and the good looks, of his intended, which was listened to with some impatience. "That may be a' verra good," said Mains, "bit has she ony *siller*, man, *that's* the main thing."

Tam was a good deal taken aback by the abruptness of this question, and he looked very like a culprit as he made answer, "Nae vera muckle o' *that*, aw doot."

"Weel, aw'm sorry t' hear't," said Mains, "aw ey thocht 'at ye wid a had mair sense than invaigle yersell wi' a tocherless lass."

"O, bit fin ye see 'er I'm sure ye'll think a lot o' 'er for a' that."

"Awa man! aw wonner t' hear ye. Ye think yersell a sharp han' 'at makin' a bargain—this maiter o' leukin'

oot for a wife, noo, wis worth *a'* yer cleverness, an' aw wis ey assurin' masel' 'at ye wid exercees't t' the best advantage, bit it seems ye're t' ca yer hogs till a peer mairket aifter a'—railly Tam, aw never thocht ye wid hae deen onything sae silly."

"Weel, it canna be helpit noo," said Tam, "awm rael sorry 'at ye sud be onywise disappintit aboot it. It's a pity I didna think o' tellin' ye seener, for I doot I've latten things gang o'er far a-length t' draw back noo."

Poor Tam looked so "doon i' the mou' " at this prompt and decided disapproval of the step he intended to take that Mains felt a kind of sorry for him, and by way of taking off the edge of the reproof a little, he added in a somewhat kindlier tone, "Hooever, as ye say, aw suppose it canna be helpit noo; ye man jist mak' the best o' a bad job. Ye'll maybe get on winten't, but, ae man, ye wid hae fan 'at a sma' bit tocher, tho' it had been bit the maiter o' a hunner poun' or twa, wid hae been a terrable help t' ye."

We are sorry to say it, but truth compels us to add that, barring her rather good-looking face, Tam's wife had little else to recommend her, for she was senseless, and had no management in household affairs. He soon found that his marriage largely increased the cost of living, and the consequence was that, in a short time, it could easily be seen that the two lived together on anything but agreeable terms.

IX.—Frank Hepburn and Patrick Johnston begin Life.

VERY different from all this, and much more unpretending, was the manner in which Frank Hepburn and his friend, Patrick Johnston, entered on the duties of that line of life which they had chosen to follow. It was in the end of the year 1803, when they were about sixteen years of age, that, obtaining the reluctant consent of Mrs. Johnston, they called together at the office of a shipowner in Aberdeen, and stated that they wished to go to sea, and would gladly enter his service as apprentices on the conditions usually observed in such cases. They were questioned as to their friends, and the information they gave was quite satisfactory. Judging from their appearance, they were two very likely youths for the sea, and the gentleman spoke to them very kindly. He informed them that, at that moment, there was no opening in any vessel belonging to him, or under his management, but that, in a few months, he would have occasion for one, if not two apprentices, and he, accordingly, noted down their names and address, promising that he would let them know when a vacancy occurred. When they left the office, they both felt that the first step in their future career had been taken, and they went home to await the issue. Accordingly, in the spring of 1804, they received the expected notice that they were wanted, and the next day all was settled. Their outfit was certainly not of an extravagant description. It consisted of two suits of clothes, some changes of underclothing, and a "hammock," the whole costing little over ten pounds for each, and there was some saving and scraping before that

sum could be raised. They were glad to find that they were to serve on board the same vessel, because, together, the pleasures they might enjoy would be enhanced, while their trials would be lightened.

The day on which they left their home there were not many words spoken. Mrs. Johnston, though she felt their departure most keenly, was too busy getting their things in order to waste time in any manifestations of inordinate grief, and the old uncle said very little; probably he accused himself of having contributed in some degree to the bringing about of the separation that was now imminent. About noon, the cart came to the door that was to convey them and their little belongings to the vessel in the harbour of Aberdeen, and, as Mrs. Johnston had resolved to see them on board, she got into the cart, and the lads, having bidden their old friend an affectionate good-bye, took their seats beside her. The old sailor stood at the door looking after them as long as they were in sight, shading his eyes with his hand from the sun, and occasionally wiping them with the sleeve of his jacket, for they were moist with tears.

During the journey from Belhelvie to Aberdeen, Mrs. Johnston gave them much motherly advice about washing their clothes, darning their stockings and other needful operations which youths at sea have usually to do for themselves. Arrived at the ship, she remained for a short time carefully observing how they were likely to be situated, and just before leaving she drew them a little to one side and took her leave of them in a few simple but earnest words. "Weel laddies," she said in a voice broken with emotion, "I maun awa' an' leave ye. See 'at ye dee the richt gate noo, an' oh aw houp ye winna learn t' drink or t' sweer the wye 'at a lot o' the sailors diz; bit mine t' read yer Bible fan ye can get time and say yer gweed words, an' the Almichty 'ill tak' care o' ye o' the sea as weel's upo' the dry lan'; an' aw houp we'll a'

be spare't t' meet again. Good-bye t' ye Pattie. Good-bye t' ye Frank laddie, an' God bless ye baith." She could say no more, her heart was full, and on her lonely journey homeward to Belhelvie she felt like a mother who has been bereft of all her children in one day. As for the youths themselves, they were in high spirits at the prospect that was opening up before them. But, no doubt, when the novelty of their position had passed away, like most young men in such cases, they had to confess that a sailor's life was not altogether so pleasant as they had imagined. Their choice was made, however, and they resolved to stick to it like men.

During the years of their apprenticeship, the voyages they made were chiefly to the Baltic, varied at intervals with occasional runs to London and Sunderland, but, when their indentures had been served out, their lines diverged. Hepburn went into a vessel employed chiefly in the American trade, while Johnston took a berth with a company that prosecuted the whale fishing in Davis Straits, for at that time there was a small fleet of vessels belonging to the port of Aberdeen, built expressly for this trade, and it was often highly remunerative, not only to the owners but also to the seaman, as, over and above their stipulated wages, they had a certain commission or percentage on the quantity of oil which each voyage produced.

X.—David Buchan as a Widower.

Leaving the two gallant youths to pursue their arduous vocation on the "salt sea wave," and Tam Paterson to make his anticipated fortune as quickly as possible, we return for a little to Mains of Yonderton, and we find that the death of his wife has made little change on David Buchan or the mode in which he lived and conducted his affairs. When a man comes to be between fifty and sixty years of age he does not readily leave off habits formed in early life, which have grown with his growth and strengthened with his strength. On the contrary, it is generally found that they grow stronger and more confirmed with advancing years, till they become, as it were, a second nature. So it was with Mains. He was childless, and it might be said friendless also. He had no particular regard for anybody that might come after him, and, therefore, could have had no special object in pinching himself or wanting anything that might have been for the comfort of himself or his household; and yet he was as "grippy" and hard to deal with as ever. But, as Jock Hoolesson had forseen, it was in the domestic arrangements of the farm kitchen that the more liberal administrations of the mistress was most missed, for she had always made it a point to do well to the servants in the matter of their diet, and Mains himself was never allowed to interfere. These matters were now managed by one Eppie Watson, a middle-aged female, whom Mains had engaged as housekeeper. From motives of her own she was anxious, from the first, to approve herself one who might safely be trusted to carry

out her employer's views on domestic economy, for she could not forget the fact that Mains was now a widower, and that more unlikely things had happened than that she might yet become Mrs. Buchan the second, if she could only manage to create a favourable impression. Accordingly, the milk supplied to the servant men was now thinner than it had been in Mrs. Buchan's time, and frequently it would have a decidedly bluish tinge. The kail and the brose were not so well "hired" as they used to be. Instead of the good ale, a person must have had a very quick sense of taste who could have detected the presence of malt in that which was now served out—it seemed to be a compound of treacle and water. On one occasion Eppie complained that a "broust" which she had prepared continued flat after it had been bottled, and that it "widna work." "Fat wye cud it work," said Jock Hooieson, "it's railly not *able*."

Mrs. Buchan was never known to give "sowens" for dinner except on a very rare occasion. She had often been heard to remark that "sowens micht be a' verra weel for waikley fouk, bit that they waurna mate t' set doun till a workin' man." Eppie Watson had no such scruples. Sowens now became a staple article of diet, much to the disgust of the servants, but being peaceably disposed fellows, they were willing to put up with them in moderation rather than appear ill to please.

The visits of "feel Peter Milne," as he was usually called, were now few and far between, compared with what they had formerly been, but he still continued to put in an appearance at an "anterin" time. He gave old David Buchan a good rub one day that he came to the Mains, just as the household were sitting down to a dinner of sowens in the kitchen. Peter had his allowance set down to him, apart from the rest, at a small table on the end of the "deese." It was one of his peculiarities that he first took a good look of what was set before him,

as if forming an estimate of its value, and, when he had satisfied himself on this point, he immediately leant his forehead on his hand, and said a grace, which was always longer or shorter according to the quality of meal. If the dinner was in every way to his mind, he appeared to be very devout, and his longest grace was said; if he judged it to be but indifferent fare, his grace was of the most formal kind, consisting only of a single sentence, but, on the occasion we speak of, he began to eat his sowens without going through the form of asking a blessing at all. Mains having observed this, said, "O ye're nae sayin' a grace ava the day, Peter." Peter gave a "humph!" expressive of his dissatisfaction with the quality of the provisions, and then added in a querulous sort of tone—"It wid be a sin t' sauntifee a sup poorins!" This home thrust was received with hearty laughter by the servant men, in which Mains himself could not help joining, but the housekeeper pretended to be mightily displeased at what she called his thankless "impidence." "Birst his belly, weel awite," she said, "aw kenna fat he wid hae; that's a' the thank 'at fowk gets for beein' kine till a sornin' beggar like 'im. A body wid think he micht be glad t' tak' fat wis offer't 'im, an' be thankfu'."

XI.—Mains becomes a "Fail't Man."

About three years after the death of his wife, Mains had a severe rheumatic attack, which he never entirely got the better of, for, although he lived for five years afterwards, he never regained his former strength, but continued to be more or less an invalid. Up to the date of this illness he had been one of those hard, wiry men that had hardly ever known what it was to have "sick heart or sore head," but, as is not unusually the case with such healthy persons, he seemed to break down and become a frail man all at once. When he was so far recovered as to be able to be out, he looked older by twenty years than he did formerly. He stooped much more as he walked, and could never afterwards stand exposure to cold or damp without being the worse for it. He had been an active man all his days, and had gone through a great amount of hard work, but now he was obliged to content himself with what he called "trockin' aboot"—that is, doing any light job, such as putting out and taking in the kye, "muckin' " the byre, or delving a bit in the kail-yard in front of the house. He took this enforced inaction more patiently, however, than might have been expected from a man of his habits, and when a neighbour would "look in bye" to ask how he was keeping, he would say, "Od, man, aw'm nae that ill as lang's aw gang aboot han' idle, bit dinna bid me *dee* onything, for the wark's fairley ower ma."

"Weel ye've gotten a gey shak, but ye're nae jist sic an auld man as a' that comes till, an' maybe ye'll jist haud a wee bitty to the road again by and by."

"Weel its hard t' say, but I'se assere ye there's nae muckle sign o' that i' the meantime. There's nae

langer syne than yesterday, aw turn't o'er a bit neukie i' the yaird an' pat in a pucklie kail plants in till't. Weel, man, afore aw gat throw wi' that aw wis jist perfytlie deen oot. Aw've had t' fee anither man already t' help wi' the wark, an we had little need o' that extra expense in this hard times."

"O, weel, bit ye've wrocht a hantle o' hard wark i' yer day, Mains, an' we canna be ey hingin' i' the heed o' things. Ye sud be thankfu' at ye're nae depennin' o' the day's darg like mony een."

"Ow, aye, we maun jist be content; ye see it's a thing 'at winna force wi's, an' a' things consider't, as ye say, we've grite rizzen to be thankfu'."

It is needless to say that Mains found a kind nurse in his housekeeper, Eppie Watson, during his illness. That was an opportunity for improving her prospects not to be lost sight of, and his comfort was carefully looked to. When he was recovering she would often talk to him in a couthy and affectionate tone about "hoo ill he had been," and "hoo fear't she wis aboot 'im fan he wis at the warst," and these tender passages always culminated in an expression of pity. She would say, "if there's onybody at I feel for mair than anither it's for a widow man fan he's beginning t' turn auld an' frail, an' hiz naebody *o's nain* t' leuk aifter his comfort."

But Mains either did not, or, what is more likely, *would* not, see anything in all this, and, as if anxious to assure her that he did not feel the want which made him the object of her commiseration, he would say, "O, bit ye dee rael weel, Eppie; rael weel, I'se assere ye. Things cudna be better than they are. Na, na, awat, I've nae rizzen t' compleen."

"Aye, meybe a' that," she said, "bit fan ye wiz lyin' sae ill, I had t' dee a heap o' things aboot ye, 'at aw cudna help thinkin' it wiz hardly the place o' a fraim't 'oman t' be deein'. Ye see," she added with a modest

blush, "fan things come aboot 'at a widow man an' a single lass maun be a heap b' them leens, the neebors are sae terrable for speakin' aboot them."

"Lat them speak as lang's they like," said Mains, "it 'ill be lang t' the day ere *that* gie me ony tribble."

"Aye, bit hae ye nae respec' for my feelins?" she said.

"O bit aw canna think it's the case," said Mains, "if ye've heard onything o' that kine, it maun be some idle clashes nae worth heedin'. It wid be a bonnie story if ma nain hiret hoosekeeper cudna wite o' ma fan aw wiz onweel without beein' made a fairley o' ower a hail quintra side."

"Weel, bit we canna keep fouk's tongues fae waggin'," said Eppie, "an' there's anither thing," she added, " 'at aw canna help thinkin' aboot sometimes, an' it's this—beein' a single 'oman, I may hae t' leave ye 'at ony time, an' if ye wiz takin' anither ill turn like yon 'at ye had last an' me awa free ye, fat wid come o' ye syne?"

But Mains did not seem at all appalled even at such a dire prospect as this, for although Eppie made this last appeal with a considerable amount of tenderness in her voice, he was actually so unfeeling as to make answer.

"Fat wid come o' ma? 'Od, aw wid jist need t' get some ither body, aw suppose. Bit fat's the eese o' speakin' that gate. Ye ken I've promise't nae t' forget ye, an', a' things consider't, aw doot it's nae ilka wye 'at ye'll sheet yer niz in t' sic a het nest."

It was rather unfeeling of Mains to talk in this manner, and to oppose such mercenary considerations to the warm affection of his housekeeper, but, from what the reader knows of him by this time, he will admit it is only what might have been expected from the man.

By and by she began to see her attempts to get round the old man were not to be successful, and that she must just content herself with the hope that he would leave her

something handsome when he died. This modification of her views had beneficial results as far as the other servants were concerned, for it was observed that her housekeeping was now conducted on a more liberal scale. She probably reasoned thus with herself, "Fat's the eese o' me gettin' ill t' masell scrapin' an' hoordin' up the wardle t' the like o' Mains for a 'at he's likely t' leave t' me. He's sure t' leave the feck o's siller t' that greedy slipe Paterson 'at hauds sic a wark wi' 'im, an' fat for sudna a' body 'at's aboot's han' be weel aneuch deen till as lang's he's t' the fore."

XII.—A Word of Caution and a Resolve.

If Tam Paterson toadied and was obsequious to David Buchan when he was well and strong, it need hardly be said that he became more attentive still when the old man's health failed. Not that he visited him oftener than he had done before, for had he gone to Mains of Yonderton too frequently, Mains would have very soon told him that "it wid set 'im better t' bide at hame an' atten' till his business"; but he took care to keep himself in mind by sending him little presents occasionally when he had an opportunity. Sometimes it would be half a dozen yellow haddocks or a loaf of "fite breed," which was a rare thing in those days at places that were remote from a large town; and on one or two occasions he had been known to send a small quantity of tea, which was rarer still—so rare, indeed, that at first Eppie did not know the way to prepare it, but supposed it should be boiled and the leaves eaten like kail. All this generosity was quite foreign to Tam's natural disposition, for he never liked to part with anything without knowing what for, but no doubt he believed that in sending these little presents to his old friend he was making a very good investment.

On the occasion of his visits, which were usually twice or thrice a year, at what he called his slack times, he constantly professed the utmost anxiety for Mains's comfort, but he was always suspicious of the housekeeper's influence; and she, in return, disliked him most cordially. She had a nasty habit of eavesdropping when there was any "unco body" in the ben end of the house with her master; and if she had overheard the following

conversation which took place between him and Tam, when on one of his visits, it would sufficiently account for her dislike to the latter. "I'm gled," says Tam, " 'at though ye're far fae bein' strong, ye're ey wonnerfu' cheerie and contentit."

"O, what gweed wid it dee me," said Mains, "t' be ony ither thing. Aw hiv tribble aneuch sometimes upo' my body, an' iv aw wis t' be fretty an' unhappy i' my min', it wid only mak' it waur t' thole."

"Vera true, only it's just the naetur o' some fouk, ye see, an' they canna help it; but, as ye say, grumlin' an' compleenin' can only mak' things waur, an' then ye're nae needin' t' wint for onything ye can tak', an' aw see 'at Eppie's vera attentive t' ye."

"O, verra," said Mains, in an approving tone; "aw culdna be better deen till than aw am, an' she's rael thrifty an' managin' in keepin' the hoose besides."

"There's jist a danger," said Tam, with a dubious shake of his head, "in lattin' the like o' 'er get o'er muckle her ain wye; it's a' vera weel for a whillie, bit by an' by they're ill for forgettin' their place, an' gettin' the upper han' a'thegither."

" 'Od, I never gie mysell ony tribble aboot that as lang as things gang on the richt gate."

"Ay, bit ye'll need t' notice t' keep her in her ain place though, or she'll maybe win' ye in till a snorl yet; it's nae for naething 'at she's makin' hersel' sae agreeable—ye may depen' upo' that."

"Ov coorse, it's nae for naething. Aw can never expeck that—the woman has gweed wauges."

"O aw dinna mean that. She's expeckin' 'at ye'll leave 'er a curn siller, or 'at ye'll maybe mairry 'er yet, fa wid ken. At onyrate, it's as weel t' be on ye're gaird wi' 'er, for fan an 'oman comes t' be o' the borders o' forty years auld, an' hasna had an offer, she turns a kine o' *desperate*, an' if she gets the vera *least* encouragement,

she comes that fest ben on a body 'at sometimes a man hardly kens fat he's aboot till his neck be in o' the mink."

"Bit think, Tam, upo' hoo auld I am," Mains said. "Aw'm ayont sixty, an' gettin' rail frail besides—the time's past for ony thochts o' that kine noo, as far as aw'm concern't."

"Sall bit Eppie mayna think that though. Ye've heard the byeword—'The auld bress 'ill buy a new pan.' "

"Ay, ay," says Mains with a quiet chuckle, "an' aw've heard anither byeword—'Burnt bairns dread the fire.' Aw dinna neen wooner at *you* bein' suspicious o' the women fouk, ahin the wye 'at ye wis tricket yersel'."

Mains's illness and long-continued frailty had the effect of bringing back to his mind the conversations he had had with his wife years before about making a will. He now felt that it would be a proper thing to do so, but the terms of such a document, and the best mode of going about it, cost him a great deal of anxious thought. When he fell athinking on this subject, he would sometimes look so pensive and ill at ease that Eppie would ask if there was "ony thing tribblin' 'im," or if he was feeling "waur than's eeswal," and she could hardly believe him when he assured her that he was not.

He still entertained the idea of leaving the bulk of his property to Tam Paterson, who, he was certain, would "haud it weel thegither." Frank Hepburn he had heard little of since he went to sea, though he remembered well that he had been a great favourite with Mrs. Buchan. His final resolution was that he would see the Rev. Mr. Mair, his minister, on the subject. He knew of one or two cases where the minister had drawn out documents of this nature for parishioners, and he did not see what was to prevent his rendering a similar service to him; but as to this he resolved to be guided by the view that the reverend gentleman himself might take of the matter.

Following out this resolve, he said to his housekeeper one morning, "Eppie, ye'll bring ma a sup het watter 'at I may gie masel' a shave, an' lay oot ma best breecks an' ma Sunday's quite. It's like t' be a fine day, an' aw think aw'll tak' a stap doon the length o' the Kirktoon."

"Dear me, fat's pitten that in ye're heed? Ye ken ye hinna been able t' gang t' the kirk this mony a lang, an' if the minister sees ye i' the Kirkton he'll be thinkin' it wid jist set ye as weel t' come to the hoose o' Gweed o' the Sawbath day."

"He can think onything he likes. I've tell't 'im mair than eense 'at the rizzon fu aw canna gang t' the kirk is, nae bit fat aw micht traivill the distance, bit 'at aw canna sit sae lang in ae powster withoot beein' the waur o't. Bit as for him seein' ma, it's mair than likely he'll dee that, for it's t' see him 'at's ma prencipal eeran'."

"T' see the minister," said Eppie. "Fat i' the wordle d'ye wint t' see him aboot?"

"Weel, it's nae grite affair," said Mains, who wished particularly that she should have no suspicion as to the real purpose of his visit, "it's nae o' muckle consequence; but the last time 'at he wiz in aboot seein's he said aw wid maybe gie 'im a yokin' o' the cairts t' the takin' hame o's peats, an' aw wid jist like t' see gin they be fit for drivin' yet, an' fat day wid shoot 'im best."

"O, that's a' is't. Weel, aw think if he wints that fawvor o' ye it's seerley little aneuch 'at he sud lat ye ken the time, but if ye *maun* sen' t' see aboot it, coodna some o' the boys tak' a message till 'im, an' nae had ye trailin' awa' that lenth, fatigin' yersel' for nae purpose."

"O weel, ye see," said Mains, "he's been vera kine comin' to see *me*, an' aw think it wid leuk mair minefu' like if aw wis t' tak' a stap doon bye masel'." And, accordingly, he did so.

XIII.—David Buchan calls on the Minister.

While Mains is on his way to the manse, we shall take the liberty of introducing a few sentences descriptive of the Rev. Mr. Mair, the minister of the parish. He was the younger son of a good family, and had studied for the Church, not because he had any desire to become a minister or possessed any particular fitness for the sacred office, but simply because it was an honourable profession, and his family had some influence with the patron. At the time we introduce him to the reader he was, comparatively speaking, a young man, and but a few years ordained to the charge. He was a good specimen of the "moderate" type of clergymen so common in the Church of Scotland in the early part of the present century. It was said that during the long course of his ministry he had never composed more than five-and-twenty sermons, and these he preached in regular rotation, as he kept them in the corner of one of the shelves of his bookcase, and always drew the sermon he was to preach from the bottom of the pile and laid it on the top when it had been delivered. But with the great majority of his people the service of the sanctuary was so much a matter of cold formality that though they must have heard the same discourses over and over again, there were few who could recognise any of them as old acquaintances, or, to put it more broadly, "cauld kail het again." It was different with the prayers, however, for as he had only two forms they necessarily occurred every week, and, consequently, they could not fail to be

familiar to all, even the youngest of his hearers. We have heard it said that while visiting the parish school on one occasion, and asking a few simple questions at the boys, he inquired at one keen-looking "birkie" whether he was always careful to say his prayers. "Yes," said the boy. "And what do you pray for?" he asked; whereupon the boy commenced to repeat the minister's longest prayer verbatim. "Yes, yes," said Mr. Mair, stopping him and looking a good deal taken aback. "That will do; I see you are a good boy, a very good boy." But the boy thinking no doubt that he had done very well, and anxious to let the minister know that he could do better still, looked up briskly, and added, "Aw can say the ither een tee!"

But although Mr. Mair was not much of a preacher, he took a very lively interest in the temporal affairs of his people, and few men could better comprehend a difficulty or give more sound advice than he could do when it was wanted. It was true there was something in his style of address that savoured a good deal of pomposity; yet his manner did not repel his simple-minded parishioners, but only made them feel that his education and social position were superior to theirs, and, if anything, it rather increased their respect for him.

When Mains presented himself at the minister's door he was very kindly received, and, when the preliminary enquiries after his health had passed, he lost no time in entering upon the business on which he had called, which, as the reader knows, had nothing whatever to do with the driving of peats, that having been merely a little bit of a ruse on his part.

"Aw've come doon bye t' see ye the day," he said, "aboot a maiter 'at aw've been thinkin' a gweed hantle aboot this whillie back, an' that's aboot makin' some kine o' a sattlement. Aw'm turnin' o'er t' years noo, an' hinna jist been verra strong this lang time. Dinna ye

think, sir, 'at it wid be a proper thing 'at aw sud get a bit paper drawn oot explainin' hoo aw wid like things t' gang if onything wiz t' come o'er ma?"

The minister nodded his approval of what was proposed, while Mains continued—"We wud like t' keep the grip oorsells as lang's we can, bit, ye see, we canna dee that ayont a certain time in spite o's."

"That's very true," said Mr. Mair, "and I quite approve of what you propose with regard to your affairs. I hold it to be the duty of every one who has anything to bequeath, be it much or little, to leave matters in such a position as that there shall be the least possible chance of misunderstanding, or of unseemly disputes, after his death."

"Weel, cud ye vreet oot a dockyment o' that kine for me?"

"I suppose I could. I have a form of a will which I have found to be very useful, and which will probably apply to the circumstances, but I will be better able to judge of this when you explain to me what your intentions are."

"Weel," said Mains, "I'se tell ye fat I've been thinkin' aboot; aw wud leave toonty poun t' the peeir o' the pairis gin ye thocht gweed o't, ten poun t' Eppie Watson, ma hoosekeeper, that is, if she's still wi' me at the time o' ma deeth; the same t' Jock Hooieson, 'at wiz lang a servan' t' ma at the Mains—he did ma a gweed turn at the time ma wife wiz lyen deed i' the hoose, an' aw sanna forget it till 'im. Then there's twa far-aff relations o' *her's*, Tam Paterson and Frank Hepburn, t' get the rest. Hepburn's a sailor, an' seafairin' fouk dinna think onything o' money, for aw've been taul' 'at it's naething oncommon, fan they come aff o' a lang *voge*, to see them throwin' their hard-won siller about them in hanfu's. They win't like horses and spen't like asses, as the sayin' is. Noo, aw hold 'at it's naething

short o' a *sin* t' lat siller in amo' the han's o' fouk like that. Hoo-ever, this lad wiz a terrable fawooreet o' *her's,* an' on that accoont aw wid lea' 'im a hunner poun', an' a' the rest t' Tam Paterson. He's anither kine o' a man a'thegether. He's a merchan' in Peterheed, faur he carries on a grite stur, accordin' t' a' accounts, an' a richt siccar chap he is, I'se assere ye. He winna throw's siller awa feelishly; he kens the worth o't ower weel for that. Aw think, tee, at ye micht mak' him the exeekiter."

Though Mains gave no indication of what the residue of his estate might amount to, it would probably be between three and four thousand pounds, a large sum in those days, and a decided "windfall" for Tam Paterson, who, had the truth been known regarding his affairs, was much in want of such pecuniary assistance.

"Well, of course," said Mr. Mair, "it is not any part of my duty to volunteer advice in a matter of this kind, but simply to give effect to the wishes you expressed, which I understand to be these," and he mentioned the different bequests, referring as he did so to some notes he had made while Mains was speaking.

"Preceesley," said Mains, "that's jist fat aw mean in sae mony words. Of coorse, ye can pit it in till't claes yersell, wi' a' the 'foresaids' an' 'considerin's' 'at the lawirs are sae fond o' usin'. Aw suppose ye can manage that brawly?"

"O, yes, it will be quite simple, I think. If you can wait for half an hour or so, I will put it in shape and you can sign it before you go."

"Od, it wid be richt handy if that could be manag't. Weel, as aw dinna come this lenth ilka day, I'se jist stap across t' the merchan's. There's some little bits o' accoonties atween's 'at he's auchtin' ma a sma' balance upon. I'se try an' get that sattl't up at the same time, an' that 'ill be killin' twa dogs wi' ae been, as they say."

He returned in less than an hour, and, as the paper had been written out, it was read over to him, and he signed it as his last will and testament, the minister and another acting as witnesses. He then took his homeward way, feeling rather pleased with the success of his visit to the manse, and when he reached his own house he took the "dockyment" from his pocket and put it carefully into a big old-fashioned "dask," where he kept all papers of importance.

XIV.—Tam Paterson in Difficulties.

THE success which Tam Paterson met with when he commenced business was more apparent than real. Many are disposed to give a beginner a trial, just to see whether they are to be better served by him than at the shop where they had formerly been dealing, but, if they find that they make nothing by the change, they generally fall off and return to the old place. It was probably upon this principle that Tam's shop seemed to be well patronised at first, so that he became highly flattered and talked to Mains and others with such an air of confidence and superiority, for it must be confessed he was at some pains to please his customers, and dealt rather generously with them at the outset; but no sooner did he think himself sure of their patronage than the innate greed and selfishness of his character began to manifest themselves, and he became much more hard to deal with, both in buying and selling.

By degrees the impression gained ground that articles bought from him were decidedly inferior in quality to what could be purchased in other shops in Peterhead at the same or a lower price, and there were some who asserted that sometimes he was even "jimp aneuch" with his weight. The consequence was that his trade fell off very much, and, before he had been many years in business he began to feel "ticht" for want of money. He then tried various things in addition to his ordinary business. First, he attempted to do a little in shipping, but this was a thing that he did not understand, and, instead of making anything, he lost a good deal by it. When he failed in one thing, he believed that

till then he had always been on the wrong tack, but presently he would see something else which he was confident would turn out to be a mine of wealth, but that, too, ended in disappointment, and every fresh speculation left him poorer, though, alas, not a wiser man. Ultimately, he thought he saw a way to make his fortune by embarking in a herring fishing and curing business, a trade hardly known in those days compared with the extent to which it is now carried on in Peterhead. But this required a preliminary outlay of some three hundred pounds, and, unfortunately, he was not possessed of anything like that amount. He applied to one Gilbert Ramsay, a distant relative of his wife's, for a loan of the requisite capital, but confidence was now a good deal shaken, and while his friend Gibbie Ramsay professed his willingness to advance the money, he declined to do so without some reasonable security for its repayment, and Tam could give *no* security.

At length it occurred to him that he might explain the matter to his old friend Mains of Yonderton, and ask him to make the necessary advance. It was not, however, till after a good deal of anxious consideration that he made up his mind to take this course, for he knew that Mains had a strong prejudice against lending money, and he was afraid that the effect of such an application might be to raise suspicions in the old man's mind, which might operate to his prejudice in the ultimate disposal which he might make of his property, for as yet he was ignorant of the fact that any settlement had been made. But the circumstances were urgent, and, after weighing all the probabilities, he decided to ask the accommodation from Mains, and take his chance of the consequences.

He, accordingly, paid a visit to Mains of Yonderton, ostensibly to ask for the old man's welfare, but really for the purpose of soliciting the pecuniary assistance which he had failed to procure in another quarter. This was in

the summer of 1812, and about two years after Mains's will had been prepared by the Rev. Mr. Mair, as before narrated.

As he had not been in the habit of calling at this season of the year, his arrival was quite unexpected, but when he presented himself the old man greeted him cordially.

"O, Tam, is that you," he said, "aw wisna expeckin' t' see you for naar three month yet. There's naething wrang wi' ye aw houp."

"Na, na, there's naething wrang—only somebody wiz tellin's 'at ye hidna jist been quite sae weel this whilie back, an' aw thocht aw wid jist come an' see hoo ye wiz keepin'."

"Weel, that wiz very minefu' o' ye, but aw didna think 'at ye wid a hid gweed winnin' awa' enoo, for aw doot this is a gey bizy time wi' ye."

"O aye, bit aw jist eence set aboot comin', ye see, an' I wizna willin' to pit it aff again."

"Weel, I'se tell ye fat it is," said Mains; "ye wid need t' hae honest fouk aboot yer han', an' ye wid need t' ken gey weel fa ye wiz leavin' in yer chop fan ye come awa this wye. Ye're nae like hiz 'at's fairmer kine o' fouk—fan we gang awa ony wye it's true 'at oor servans may jamff aboot an' nae dee verra muckle till we come hame again, bit that's naething, for they maybe jist mak' up for that at anither time; bit it's verra different in a place o' bizzness like yours, far there's a grite owerturn o' money—the fouk 'at's aboot your han' hiv a hantle i' their pooer, mine ye."

"True," said Tam, "there's something in fat ye say, bit ma min's quite easy upo' that score."

Mains's words seemed as if they were spoken in mockery of Tam's sadly altered circumstances, and yet he was sure that there was nothing further from the old man's mind, but that this style of speaking was just the

result of the "tall talk" in which it had been his habit to indulge on the occasion of former visits to Mains of Yonderton.

He had no opportunity of broaching the subject that night, but next day, as the weather was fine and delightfully warm, he went out with Mains, and the two sat themselves down in the pleasant sunshine on a rude summer-seat which stood in the bottom of the kailyard. The time and place seemed now to be favourable. Tam was "ettlin" to introduce the subject of the loan, and Mains himself soon paved the way for him, for it was a noticeable circumstance that, when Tam Paterson was with him, a great part of the conversation was usually about money matters.

"Ay, Tam," he said, "an' fu are ye ey gettin' on, man—makin' siller like sklate steens, aw suppose? Man, aw wuss I hid been a merchan' in place o' a fairmer, aw micht a hid a poun' for ilka shillin' 'at aw'm worth the day, an' hid a heap easier a life o't besides."

"Weel, I suppose it's natrel," said Tam, "for ilka body t' think 'at ilka *ither* body is better aff than 'imsell. Bit I sometimes think noo 'at iv I hid ma days t' begin again aw wid be a heap better in a place like this o' yours than far aw am."

"*Awa* man; aw wonner to hear ye. Fat chance hiz a fairmer wi' the like o' you. Iv he happens t' get a gweed chape place he may manage t' scrape a pucklie bawbees thegither, bit he maun fecht an' witter a' the days o's life, an' syne fan the time comes 'at he's a broken doon man, wi' hard wark an' rheumatics, like fat aw am masel, he can hae bit little enjoyment in onything."

"O, weel, bit ither fouk hiz their diffickwelties as weel as *ye* hae. There's nae t' gang farrer than mysel'. I thocht fan aw startet on ma ain accoont I wiz t' dee a' the wardle, bit, atween losses an' disappointments o' ae

kine or ither, aw maun confess 'at aw hinna gotten on near sae weel as aw thocht aw wid dee."

"Od man, aw'm sorry t' hear that," said Mains, "ye dinna mean t' say 'at ye're nae succeedin' d' ye?"

"Weel, aw dudna jist say that aither, but aw thocht aw wid a' deen *better*. Ye see it requires siller t' mak' siller, an' it wid need fully mair capital than I hae t' gar my bizzness pay as it micht dee, an' as it *wid* dee, if I hid the wherewithal t' work it richt."

"O weel, but if it's payen ye in an ordinar wye be thankfu' man. Slow an' sure's maybe the best wye aifter a'."

"There's for instance noo," said Tam, not heeding this observation, "iv I hid say three hunner poun' t' spare enoo fae ma ither bizzness, I see a wye 'at aw cud mak' it three thoosan' in a year or twa's time, an' Ise tell ye fat wye." He then entered into the details of the herring fishing speculation, which he represented as a sure and certain way of attaining untold wealth, and that very speedily.

When he had explained the matter fully, Mains said, "Od, the like o' that's a terrable temptation till a body; bit tell me this, Tam, fin it's sic a sure thing, fu dinna ye tak' the three hunner poun' fae yer ither bizzness an' start it at eense."

"Weel, ye see, that's sometimes nae verra handy. Aw wiz thinkin' 'at aw wid raither try t' get somebody till advance't. An', in fact, t' mak' a lang story short, aw wis intennin' t' spere at you fither *ye* wid be dispos't t' len' me't."

"O, na," said Mains; "lennin' siller's nae in my line ava. Aw never lent a man a shillin' in ma life, an' aw dinna think 'at aw'll begin noo."

"Weel, bit it wid be a grite accommodation," said Tam.

"Na, na, jist hae patience," said Mains, "aw may

tell ye (and here his voice was lowered to a whisper and tremulous with emotion), aw may tell ye," he said, "fat aw maybe sudna tell ye, that aw made my tessment a year or twa syne, an', wi' the exception o' ane or twa triflin' legacies, aw've leeft a'thing t' yersel', wi' full pooers o' management, so 'at fin I wear awa' ye'll get the maist feck o' fat I may leave haill heedit."

This was better news than even Tam expected. He hastened to express his gratitude and to assure him he would easily manage for the small matter of the three hundred pounds, and shortly after he took his leave.

When he reached home, the first thing he did was to write a letter to Gibbie Ramsay, who lived some two or three miles out of Peterhead, informing him of the good news he had just learned, in the view of which he was sure he would not now hesitate to give him the loan he had formerly asked—a letter which, although it had the effect of procuring for him the required advance of money, was yet destined to have a most damaging effect on his future prospects, as will appear in a subsequent chapter.

As regards Frank Hepburn and his friend, Patrick Johnston, they had now been rather more than eight years at sea, and had been very successful. During the winter of 1812-13 they both remained in port for the purpose of improving their knowledge of the theory of navigation, which was then, and for forty years afterwards, taught by Mr. William Elgen (sometimes called Bodsy Elgen) in his school situated in Drum's Lane, of Aberdeen. Frank Hepburn had been offered the command of a vessel then building for a London firm, and designed for the South American trade, while Patrick Johnston was engaged to proceed to Greenland in the spring as chief officer of the ship "Oscar," belonging to the port of Aberdeen.

XV.—A Memorable Storm.

The first day of April, 1813, was remarkable for the occurrence of one of those sudden storms of wind and snow that not unfrequently happen in this latitude after spring has fairly set in. The violence of this hurricane, the quantity of snow that fell in the short time that it lasted, and, above all, the melancholy shipwreck that occurred near the Girdleness rocks, have combined to make the day one long to be remembered in the city and county of Aberdeen, so that, even yet, it is an outstanding recollection in the minds of many who witnessed it. The weather had been unusually mild for some weeks previously, and farm work was well advanced. At Mains of Yonderton they were in the middle of the "ait seed." During the night, and in the early morning, it was comparatively calm; any wind that was stirring was from the west, and it looked as if it was to be a fine spring day, though the day before Mains had been foreboding "win' or weet" from sharp, shooting pains in his joints, which, he used to say, indicated a "cheenge" with a certainty "as muckle t' be depennit on as ony wither-gless 'at ever he hid seen." The first thing that was done in the morning was to convey some bags of seed in a cart to the fields, where they were set down at such distances apart as would be most convenient for replenishing the "Shawin-sheet," after which the men went in to breakfast, intending immediately afterwards to proceed with the sowing; but before they had finished their meal a gale sprung up suddenly from the north-east; the sky became overcast and snow began to fall. The gale increased in

violence, and the snow became heavier till all in the house declared they had never seen anything like it. Mains himself had not yet risen, but, when he heard the howling of the tempest without, he got out of bed and came ben the house to see what was going on. "'Od, boys," he said, "that's fairly a cheenge o' wither on's. Aw doot there winna be muckle sawin' the day aifter this. Fat hive ye been deein' i' the mornin'?"

"O jist fat ye tell't 's t' dee the streen," said the foreman. "We've hid oot ower the secks t' the lan', an' we're ready to begin t' saw."

"Weel, it canna be helpit noo, bit it's a pity it wiz deen, for the seed 'ill be completely connach't if this is t' lest lang—only fa cud 'a expeckit the like o' this o' the first o' Aprile?"

Going in bye to the window, he stood for a few moments looking out on to the scene. "'Od this is railly awfu'," he said. "Aw wus we may be a' preserv't; the ash tree i' the boddam o' the yard's jist bendin' t' the groun' like a saugh wan. Aw doot there'll be word o' this day yit; there'll be griter losses than the puckle ait seed 'at's stannin' there oot." All agreed in thinking that this was *very* likely.

It was about eight o'clock when they went in to breakfast, and so sudden was the advent of the storm, so close and blinding was the drift, that no one could leave the farm kitchen to attend to the cattle in the byres till it was close upon three o'clock in the afternoon, when the gale subsided, and then they had to "cast" their way to the stable and other outhouses through, in some places, from six to seven feet of snow. Some hours before this, when the gale was at its height, one young fellow, more venturesome than the rest, laughed at the idea of its being impossible to go the length of the stable, and was determined to make the attempt. So he buttoned his coat tightly, pulled his bonnet well over his

ears, and went out very boldly, but he had not gone many paces from the door till, blinded and half suffocated, he was glad to retrace his steps and get inside again, which he did with some difficulty, *minus* his bonnet, which was never seen again. Some may be disposed to think that this statement must be an exaggeration, but it is not so. At all events, it is a fact that some persons who were caught in the storm did lose their lives, being unable to bear up against it. In the parish of Foveran a woman was smothered in the drift within a stone-cast of the farmhouse to which she was going for shelter; in the Garioch district a woman shared the same fate within a few yards of her own door; and two persons lost their lives in the glens of Foudland, where the storm was particularly severe.

XVI.—The Loss of the "Oscar."

But the crowning calamity of this memorable day was the sad shipwreck and loss of life that occurred at the mouth of the Aberdeen Harbour, near to the spot now occupied by the South Breakwater, which has just been built of massive concrete blocks, capable, it is believed, of resisting the fury of the waves in the wildest storms from the south-east, which have often proved so fatal to the shipping upon this rock-bound coast.

On the last day of March the whale ship "Oscar" had all but completed her preparations for proceeding to sea, and the greater part of her crew had been shipped, though, as was usual in the circumstances, there were one or two absentees. Patrick Johnston, who, as the reader will recollect, had been engaged as chief officer, or "mate," of this ill-fated vessel, was at his post as a matter of course, and, having bidden his friends good-bye, he slept on board that night, as it was intended that they should sail on the first favourable opportunity. Early next morning, being the first of April, taking advantage of the tide and a westerly wind (for there were no steam-tugs in those days), they hauled out of the harbour, in company with the "Hercules," the "St. Andrew" and two others, all whalers; and, when they got outside the bar, they dropped their anchor, intending to wait for the remainder of the crew and for some provisions that had not yet been received on board. Including officers and men, the crew that was on board the "Oscar" at this time numbered forty-three persons all told.

She had not been many hours in this position when it began to blow very strongly from the south-east, veering round to the north-east, and, although she did not yet drift from her anchor, such a heavy sea began to roll in that, even at this period, she was considered to be in imminent danger. The gale appears to have been more fitful on the coast than in the inland districts, for, after this, it moderated for a short time, but, as everything seemed to presage a fresh outburst of the storm, the master would doubtless have returned to port, only that was now impossible from the heavy sea on the bar, and, moreover, the tide had begun to ebb. Judging it prudent, however, to get further off the land if possible, he weighed, and, getting under sail, attempted to clear the Girdleness and run to the southward; but, finding this to be impracticable, he fell to leeward, and was again under the necessity of bringing up in the face of the rocky shore within the Ness. Soon after this the gale broke in all its fury, with heavy snow or sleet, and by this time a crowd of people had assembled, for the situation was such that many began to fear, if the storm continued, that the vessel must be driven among the rocks. Frank Hepburn was early on the ground, for he was extremely anxious about the safety of Patrick Johnston, his life-long friend and foster brother.

It was about eleven o'clock a.m. that, after dragging her anchor, the "Oscar" was driven ashore in the Greyhope, near the short ness, and immediately after she struck, she lost her mainmast and mizzen-topmast.

The moment that Hepburn observed that the vessel was nearing the rocks, he, and some friends that were with him, crossed by the ferry to the Torry side, and hastened to the spot in order to render whatever assistance might be in their power, but, when they reached the point, the heartrending scene which presented itself made it but too manifest that all human efforts for the

safety of the crew would be unavailing. The vessel lay among large rocks, about three hundred yards from the shore, and, from the tremendous sea that broke over her, she was already rapidly breaking up. Soon after the mainmast went by the board, and the ship parted in two; but a considerable part of both halves remained above water for a time, on each of which a number of the ill-fated crew were congregated. First one boat put off from the wreck and then another, both nearly filled with men, but in each case they were swamped before the occupants could get into a position rightly to use the oars, and all were thrown into the sea, where, after struggling with the waves for a minute or two, the whole disappeared, with the exception of two or three strong swimmers, who struck out boldly for the shore, but they were either thrown back by the surge or borne down by the casks and other wreckage that floated about; so that, of all who took to the boats, not one escaped.

After the fate of these poor fellows had been decided, all eyes were again turned anxiously to the wreck, and on the forecastle, which still remained above water, could be seen the master and five or six others, chiefly the officers, who probably deemed it to be their duty to abide by the wreck to the last. Close to the master, Hepburn could see Patrick Johnston, the mate, looking wistfully towards the land, and occasionally making a signal for that assistance which could not possibly be rendered. The wreck lay so near to the shore that even the faces of those on board could be easily recognised, and as the well-known form and features of his friend met Hepburn's gaze in these awful circumstances, his feelings may be imagined, but they cannot be described. Almost every sea that went over the wreck swept some one from it into the yawning abyss, and he momentarily expected to see the companion of his youth and his dearest earthly friend

miserably perish before his eyes, and yet, as things were, he could do nothing to save him. The thought was maddening, and he felt as if it would ease the violent working of his feelings if he could just plunge into the sea and make an effort to go to him, though he should die in the attempt.

As for Johnston himself, his presence of mind at this awful crisis did not forsake him, but his coolness and intrepidity were such as became a brave man while looking danger and death in the face. He was a good swimmer, and, under more favourable circumstances, the distance would have been nothing, but in such a sea, and among rocks and wreckage, he had but little hope of being able to reach the shore in safety. But it was death in any case, and that probably within a few brief minutes, so he judged it was better to make a last attempt to save his life, and trust to Providence for the issue. He, accordingly, leaped from the wreck into the sea, and struck out for the shore. How intently Hepburn's eye watched him during these critical minutes on which hung the issue of life or death. At one moment he could see him lifted on the crest of a huge wave, then he would never rise to the surface again, but when he did reappear it was evident he was gaining ground, and still able to contend lustily with the billows. At length a huge wave threw him some distance shorewards, but the next moment, by the reflux of the same wave, he was carried further from the land than he had been immediately before, and, when he was next observed, he appeared to be stunned or stupified, for he was making little or no exertion, and seemed as if he were sinking, so that many of the spectators concluded it was all over with him.

But Hepburn could bear this awful suspense no longer, and, as soon as he observed the critical nature of the situation, he threw off part of his clothes, and, in

opposition to the remonstrances of many of the by-standers, rushed into the sea and made his way to the place where his friend was likely to sink to rise no more. Having reached the spot in safety, he laid hold of him, and succeeded, with great difficulty, in bringing him some distance through the surf, only to be both thrown back again into deep water. But he gallantly stuck to his charge, and, providentially, the next wave tossed them so far inland that the number of willing hands that were now extended to save them, easily succeeded in pulling them ashore, though both of them were more dead than alive. Hepburn was stunned and insensible, and was bleeding profusely from the left temple, which had come in violent contact with a floating spar or other portion of the wreck; and Patrick Johnston, whom he had so gallantly snatched from a watery grave, was so far gone as to render his restoration extremely doubtful; but both were removed as quickly as possible to the nearest house—that occupied by a retired shipmaster in easy circumstances—where they were properly attended to. Only one other seaman reached the shore in life, so that, of a crew of forty-three persons, no fewer than forty-one were drowned.

Thus perished the "Oscar" and her gallant crew, who but a few hours previously had gaily sailed out of the harbour, full of hope, and with bright prospects before them; a sad commentary truly on the uncertainty of all human calculations! The impression which the melancholy occurrence made on the public mind has been both deep and lasting, for it is a subject that is frequently spoken of to this day, and is much referred to by old people to assist them in fixing the dates of other events, which they recollected to have happened so many years before, or so many years after, the year in which the "Oscar" was lost, which, as they can never forget, was in "thirteen." Nor is this to be wondered at, for

many circumstances combine to make the loss of the "Oscar" the saddest event, probably, that has occurred at Aberdeen in modern times. Certainly no other event involving such melancholy consequences, and such a great loss of human life, has occurred here during the present century,* and yet there was much ground for thankfulness that matters were not more serious, for every one of the other whaling vessels that went out by the same tide escaped the fate of the "Oscar" only as by a miracle, all of them having dragged their anchors during the storm, and, although three of them escaped with little damage, a fourth, the "Hercules," was driven ashore on the beach at the back of the North Pier, but, fortunately, the crew were all saved, as there were no rocks, and there was a plentiful supply of those appliances that are needful in the circumstances, whereas, on the Torry side, where the "Oscar" went ashore, there was nothing of the kind to be had. More than thirty bodies of the crew of the "Oscar" were recovered near the spot where she struck, and, as they lay side by side in a long ghastly line, it was truly a mournful spectacle to see the weeping relatives endeavouring to recognise the cold and inanimate features of the dead. The bodies that were not recovered at the time appear to have been carried to the northward by the currents, as they were washed ashore at different points between Aberdeen and Slains—some of them after so long a time had passed that they could be recognised only by tattered portions of their clothing; and in all these cases the remains were decently interred in the nearest churchyard.

In the old churchyard of Newburgh, locally known as the Chapel Yard, may be seen a large flat tombstone inscribed to the memory of the captain. Underneath the

*In the tragic Torry Ferryboat disaster, which occurred on 5th April, 1876, 32 lives were lost.

inscription, which sets forth the captain's name and the circumstances attending his melancholy fate, are the following quaint lines:—

Though Boreas' blasts and Neptune's waves
Have toss'd me to and fro,
In spite of both, by God's decree,
I harbour here below.

Here at an anchor I do lie,
With many of our fleet,
Until again we must set sail,
Our Admiral, Christ, to meet.

By the application of the restoratives generally made use of in the case of persons rescued from drowning, Patrick Johnston very soon recovered, but Frank Hepburn fell into a kind of low fever, the result, it was supposed, of the injury he had received on the head, and he lay in the apartment to which he was conveyed for some weeks, during which he was nursed with the utmost attention and tenderness.

XVII.—Frank Hepburn's Return to the Mains.

When Frank Hepburn was able to be about again, he went out to his early home in Belhelvie for a short time; but as he had got a few weeks at his disposal before entering on his command, and as it was thought the change might tend to recruit his strength, it occurred to him that he might go and see his old friend David Buchan at Mains of Yonderton once more. He had not been there for eight or nine years, neither had he had any direct communication with the place since he went to sea, for in those days people were not much given to corresponding by letter, unless when they had anything very particular to communicate. But he knew from other sources that Mains was still alive, and, as the distance was not great, he started on foot one fine summer's morning, and reached the old familiar place early in the afternoon. Mains had not seen him since he was sixteen years of age, and it was hardly to be expected that he would recognise the "buirdly chiel" that now presented himself as the "laddie Hepburn," who, as a boy, had been so well known in the house where he now stood. But, when he made himself known, old Mains seemed to be quite "dumfooner't," though there was no doubt, from the cordial manner in which he welcomed him, that he was much pleased to see him.

"Aye, Frank, man," he said, "ye *are* a stranger, aw din-not believe bit it's half a score o' years sin' ye wiz here afore."

"No, it's not quite so long as that; but it's fully eight years since I was here last."

"Ye're leukin' some fite i' the face. Hinna ye been weel?"

"O, yes, I have always had good health, but I met with an accident some time ago, which I have not quite got the better of yet, and in fact, I suppose, if it had not been for that circumstance I would not have been here."

"Weel, aw'm sorry for the accident, bit aw'm gled 'at it's brocht ye doon by t' see's eence mair, an' ae man, hoo ye've growen, aw widna hae kent 'at ever aw hid seen ye."

"I daresay not," said Hepburn, "I was but a laddie i' ma teens when ye saw me last, an' now I'm five-an'-twenty."

"Aye weel, that mak's me an aul' man. I mine fin ye cam' here first ava ye wiz jist a wee bit tottim o' a loonie, nae muckle higher than ma k-nee. Tam Paterson wiz a bitty auler than you aw think, bit ye wiz ey a keen little birkie, an' aw mine fine *she* hid a terrable notion o' ye."

"You mean Mrs. Buchan. O, yes, I mind on her kindness to me many a time. I can assure you I lost a good friend when she wore awa'."

"Aye, bit there wiz mair fouk did that," said Mains, "for she had a feelin' hert for a' crayter an' wiz ey deein' somebody a gweed turn. Aw suppose if I hadna a kine o' leukit aifter things i' the hoose masell an' try't t' keep 'er within boons, she wid a been mair apen hannet than we cood hae weel affoordit, bit, ye see, she's awa'; an' aw'm turn't aul' an' eeseless masell noo, an' aw sometimes think aw winna be lang t' the fore aitherin, for aw'm far fae beein' the man at aw wiz fan ye saw me last."

"Weel, I was just going to say," remarked Hepburn, "that there's a great change on you as weel as on me since I was here."

"Aye, aw believe ye, Frank, laddie, bit it's a cheenge in anither direction, for ye're muckler an'

stronger, bit my strength's completely awa', an' aw'm growin' less bookit the langer 'at aw live. Ye're jist lik' a man startin' till's wark i' the early mornin', rael strong an' hairty; bit aw'm liker a body gaen hame at nicht, tire't and deen out wi' the day's darg, an' jist ready t' lie doon an' sleep."

Mains evidently felt a wee bit "grite hairtet" as he made this last remark, for there was a slight quiver in his voice, but Hepburn hastened to cheer him up by assuring him that though he was not so young or so strong as he had been, yet, with care and good "guideship," he might live for many years, and he instanced the case of Mrs. Johnston's uncle, the old sailor, who, he said, lived till he was nearly ninety, and for the last twenty years of his life was a frailer-looking man than Mains was; but Mr. Buchan only shook his head and said that "he kent his ain waikness best."

But though he was frailer in body, Hepburn observed that he was fonder of news, and much more disposed to converse on general subjects. When he knew him formerly he had seldom seen him manifest much interest in anybody's affairs but his own, or at most only in such matters as were intimately connected with his own line of life; but being now quite unfit for the tear and wear of hard work which he had formerly undergone, he was glad of anybody to news with him, as it made the time pass more pleasantly. Hepburn's visit was, therefore, extremely welcome, and during his stay Mains questioned him frequently as to how he liked the sea, what foreign countries he had visited, and what he thought of them. But specially, of course, he had a desire to know how farming was conducted in the different places where he had been, what crops were grown, whether the soil was good, and so on — on all which points Hepburn gave him the fullest information, while Mains would make running comments on what was

told him, which were often rather amusing, as they seldom failed to bring out some of his well-known peculiarities. When, for instance, Hepburn expatiated on the extreme productiveness of the soil in some foreign lands, that it required hardly any cultivation, but brought forth the most luxuriant crops without labour or manure, he was struck with wonder and exclaimed, "Dear me, man! there's a gey difference atween that an' hiz here, 'at maun jist, as it waur, w-ring a crap oot o' the grun' wi' dint o' hard wark an' dungin', an' a puir aneuch crap it is sometimes aifter an' a'. Iv oor lan' wiz t' work that wy 'at ye speak o', fairmin' wid be an easy an' a money-makin' concern by fat it is, Ise assere ye."

And when he told him, further, that in some places, he had seen an almost boundless extent of the finest land in the world lying absolutely waste and useless, he declared it was a sin and a shame that such should be the case. "An' yet," he added, as another possible view of the matter occurred to him, "aw'm nae verra sure fat the result micht be in this countra iv a' that fine lan' wiz ooner crap. Produce o' a' kine wid be sae plentifu' 'at prices wid be sure t' fa'. Aw daursay things are jist as weel's they are noo fan aw think on't. A'thing's wisely order't ye see."

As an event of very recent occurrence, the wreck of the "Oscar" was fresh in everybody's mind at that time, and he was much interested in the description which, as an eye-witness, Hepburn was able to give of that melancholy catastrophe; but even in the case of such a sad calamity as that was, while regretting the loss of life, he could not forget the loss of property as well. "I've been taul', he said, " 'at the ship an' her stores wiz weel worth ten thoosan' poun'. *Ten thoosan' poun',*" he said again, repeating each word slowly and with emphasis. "Only think on sic a soom o' money; an' the

whole t' be swalliet up in a moment, as ye micht say; it's seerly aneuch t' ruin a' body 'at wiz conneckit wi' 'er."

In this manner the time passed pleasantly away, and as the weather was good, Hepburn felt his strength returning every day. Judging from his previous knowledge of old Mains, he had not expected much enjoyment from his visit before going down, but when, at the end of three weeks, he was obliged to leave for the purpose of entering on his duties, he did so with regret. As for Mains, he felt that he had never rightly understood or estimated the young man's character before, and when he remembered the preference that his wife had always manifested for him, his heart reproached him for the shabby way he had dealt with him in his will. Had he been capable of making an alteration on his settlement with his own hand, it is probable he would have done so at once, but as he could not trust himself to do that, he resolved to speak to Mr. Mair again about it on the first opportunity, as, on mature deliberation, he had now resolved that the fairest way would be to leave the residue of his means to Tam Paterson and Frank Hepburn equally.

XVIII.—Nancy Walker, the Pack Merchan'.

It was not long till Tam Paterson had full information about Hepburn's visit to Mains of Yonderton—how well he had been received by old David Buchan, how long he had remained, and all about it. These particulars he learned from one Nancy Walker, a woman who had travelled long in the locality, carrying a kind of covered basket, or pack, containing a variety of articles which she disposed of to good advantage at the different farm towns in the district. These articles consisted of handkerchiefs, "mutches," tape, needles and thread, and other nick-nacks, very useful in a family, though not of great pecuniary value.

Persons who move about in this way are always picking up information, and Nancy generally managed to keep herself pretty well posted up in the domestic affairs of most people of any note within the circuit of her calls. She even knew for a fact that Mr. Mair, the minister, had made a will for Mains, though she did not know anything about its terms, further than that the general belief in the district was that the greater part of the property would be left to Tam Paterson.

As her visits were usually made at regular intervals, she was often charged with messages to be delivered, and sometimes with a letter if the matter was deemed important and the person to be communicated with lived at a distance, for Nancy's punctuality in attending to whatever she took in hand could always be depended on. She made her purchases in Peterhead as being the

nearest town of any importance, and thither she repaired at intervals for the purpose of replenishing her stock-in-trade when it began to get low.

In the course of her peregrinations she happened to come to Mains of Yonderton during Hepburn's visit, and, having observed somebody that she did not know stepping about the doors with Mains as she was making her way to the house, she must, as a matter of course, ascertain who it was. Accordingly, no sooner had she got into the kitchen and proceeded to display her wares to Eppie Watson, with the view of effecting a sale, than she remarked:—

"Aw see ye hiv a stranger."

"Aye," said Eppie, "it's a lad Hepburn. He use't t' be here aften i' the mistress's time. He wiz some frien' o' hers, bit this is the first time he's been at the Mains since she dee't, an' that's mair than saiven year syne noo, so that aw daursay the fowk hereaboot hiv amaist forgotten 'im."

"Hepburn, did ye say, Frank Hepburn, ae aw mine fine upo' seein' him here lang ago. He's a cousin o' Tam Paterson's, in Peterhead, at aw buy some bits o' things fae occasionally, though he's a man 'at aw care-na' muckle aboot. He gaed t' the sea this lad, if I mine richt. Weel, he hiz the cut o' a sailor aboot 'im, noo fan aw think on't. Aye, an' it's him is't?"

"It's jist him," said Eppie, "an' awat a rael nice lad he is. He's gaen awa' forrin' verra seen, aw believe; bit he gat 'imsell naar han' kill't an droon't baith savin' a man, a cousin o's nain, aw believe, aff o' the 'Oscar,' an' he just cam' doon here for a whillie ere he wid get richt strong again. He's been here for aboot three ooks noo."

"That's queer, noo," said the other in a musing tone, "aw cud almost sweer 'at aw've heard Tam Paterson affirm 'at Mains hid that terrable an ill will at

this lad 'at he cud hardly bide the sicht o' 'im aboot the toon, tho' he admittet 'at he wiz a grite fawvoreete wi' Mrs. Buchan, at's deed an' awa."

"Weel, aw widna doot," said Eppie, "he wid try t' gar a body *believe* that aw dawrsay, fin he comes in aboot here, butterin' an phrasin' wi' the auld man, aneuch t' scunner a tyke. Ma vera bleed biles fan aw think o' the things 'at he's said aboot masell fan he little thocht 'at I wiz hearin' 'im. Nae ae hair diz he care for the maister, but jist for fat he can get aff o' 'im; an' iv he said to you 'at the auld man had ony ill wull at this lad, it's mair than likley he's been leein' aboot that, as he hiz deen aboot ither things t' my certain knowledge."

"Ou aye, awat he lees like Waghorn. It's ey fair fa' masel' wi' Tam Paterson. I ken the style o' 'im brawly."

"At onyrate," continued Eppie, "I never saw the maister sae weel pleas't like wi' onybody as he seems t' be wi' this lad. He's been in forrin quintras, ye see, an' seen a hantle o' the wordle for sae young a man, an' Mains seems never t' tire o's news, it's so enterteenin'.—Fat are ye seekin' for this black silk napkin wi' the fite tic in't?"

(The reader should understand that this was an article worn by ladies round the neck but under the dress, yet a good part of it was seen, as dresses were usually made more open about the neck and breast than they are now.)

"That een's only saiven an' saxpince, it's the best o' the lot."

"That's dear, isna't."

"Weel, bit it's a big size, ye see, an' o' rael gweed quality," and she unfolded it to its full dimensions, in order to show it off to the best advantage.

At this moment Hepburn and Mains came in, and, that she might not hurry her customer, who she saw had

her "hert an' her ee" in the aforesaid napkin, Nancy turned her attention to the new-comers, addressing them in an off-hand, jocular way, but yet with a shrewd eye to business.

"Come awa', sirs," she said, "ye cudna hae come in handier, for here's a nice young lad 'at aw'm sure 'ill buy some bonnie thing an' gie it t' Eppie here for a keep-sake like, afore he gangs awa' again." And then, addressing him more directly, she added—"Ye maybe dinna mine upo' me, bit I mine upo' you brawly fin ye wiz a keen, blithe face't laddie 'at a'body liket as seen's they saw ye—that's t' say, fouk 'at hid the eese o' their een." (And here there was a quizzical glance at Mains.) "An' in my opinion ye're face says as muckle for ye noo as it did."

In her own homely way Eppie had been very kind to Hepburn during his brief sojourn at the Mains, so that he was willing to embrace the opportunity that was now afforded him of making her some acknowledgment for her trouble by presenting her with any article out of Nancy's pack that she might have a fancy for; and, as she was still engaged in a minute inspection of the contents, Hepburn said, "dy'e see anything there that you would like, Eppie?"

"Aye," said Eppie, "there's a silk nepkin here 'at aw wid like terrable weel, bit she's seekin' eeseless muckle for't—it's saiven an' saxpince she says."

"Well, if ye'll accept of it fae me, I'll be happy t' make ye a present o't."

"Ae, weel, aw'm sure that wid be verra kine o' ye," said Eppie, in a flutter of satisfaction, "it's railly o'er muckle."

"Noo, noo, Eppie," said Mains, who had seated himself by the fire, "that's a praisent t' ye for eence 'oman. Awat ye'll be sayin' it wid be lang t' the day ere ye gat onything o' that kine fae me."

"Weel," said Eppie, "if we wiz be oorsels twa aw micht be awears o' tellin' ye something o' that kine; bit, ye ken, it disna dee t' be makin' remarks o' that kine afore fouk, though weel awat if aw wiz t' say't, it wid be naething mair than the trowth."

Hepburn now handed half a sovereign to Nancy in payment of his purchase. "Eh! gold," she said, "aw din-not believe 'at I can gie ye the cheenge."

"O well," said he, "it doesn't signify; ye may keep the half-crown for your complimentary remarks on my personal appearance."

Nancy hastened to express her gratitude to Hepburn for his generosity, but she was cut short by Mains exclaiming—"Hoot, toot, that's nae wy o' deein' business ava. Aw pit nae doot noo 'at iv Eppie had been leeft t' manage the maitter hersell, she wid hae bocht that bit thing o' a nepkin for five shillins at the verra ootside, and there's ye may say *ten* paid for't. It's railly shamefu'. Bide ye see," he continued, getting to his feet. "Aw think I hiv some sma' cheenge in a drawer ben the hoose; ye needna haive yer siller awa' that wy for wint o' cheenge."

"Noo Mains," said Nancy, as she deposited the gold piece carefully in her purse, "jist sit still an' keep yersell easy; dinna pit yersell t' ony tribble man aboot a thing 'at disna concern ye; fat needs ye grudge a bit o' gweed luck till a peeir crayter like me, as lang's it tak's naething oot o' *yoor pooch,* railly aw never saw the like o' ye." And she made all haste to pack up and begone, lest, in spite of her remonstrance, the old man should insist on producing his "sma' cheenge," for the fact that Nancy had first got the full price which she had asked without "priggin" or abatement, and, in addition to that, had fleeced his young friend of half-a-crown, had evidently so upset Mains's notions of driving a bargain that he could hardly get over it.

XIX.—Nancy Walker visits Peterhead.

When Nancy Walker next visited Peterhead, she took care to make Tam Paterson's shop one of her places of call; and on that occasion it need hardly be said that she made the most of the circumstances narrated in the last chapter. Tam was a man that she had no favour for, and she felt a kind of satisfaction in the thought of giving him a piece of news that, she was certain, would both surprise and disappoint him. When she entered the shop, she found him alone, as was too often the case. She made a very trifling purchase, namely, a dozen reels of thread, or, as they were more commonly called, "pirns." "An' see," she said, " 'at they binna like the last 'at aw bocht fae ye, for they waur jist a perfect intak."

"Fat wiz wrang wi' them?" said Tam.

"Weel, they were jist a lump o' wid an' the thinnest scriffin o' threed on them 'at ever ye saw. T' leuk at them a body wid hae thocht 'at they were gettin' a terrable bargain, they waur sae thick an' muckle bookit like, bit fan they began to use them they waurna lang in seein' their mistak', for aifter a feow threeds had been ta'en aff they had naething bit a bare stick. Aw never saw sic a deception."

"Aw dinna ken hoo that cud hae been," said Tam; "at ony rate, ye got them as I got them masel'."

"Weel, it's like ye maun deal wi' queer kine o' fouk than. Some o' my customers waur sayin' 'at iv aw brocht ony mair pirns o' yon kine t' them aw sud get nae mair o' their cheenge; but I taul' them it wisna my

blame, 'at aw bocht them fae you, an' 'at aw had only tippence aff o' the dizzen o' them, so that fa' ever had the lang profit it wisna me."

Tam mumbled something about his profit being "nae verra ill t' coont etherin;" and as he proceeded to put up the pirns in paper the conversation continued.

"Will there be ony ither little thing the day?" he said.

"Na, that's a' the day."

"Fan wiz ye in the direction o' Mains o' Yonderton?" he asked.

"O, aw wiz roon that wye aboot three weeks syne."

"An' ye wiz in about of coorse."

"Aw wiz that."

"An' ye saw the aul' man aw suppose."

"Aye, aw did that tee."

"Weel, hoo's he keepin'?"

"O, rael weel," said Nancy, "aw think he wiz leukin' better an' cheerier like than aw've seen 'im for a lang time."

"Aye, but he is failin' though," said Tam. "I saw an unco difference on 'im the last time 'at I wiz up."

"Sal bit he's cantlet t' the road again wonnerfu'. I can assere ye he may see's a' oot yet."

"O na, i' the coorse o' natur, ye ken, it canna be lang."

"Weel, it mayna be lang wi' ony o's, for we hinna a lease o' oor life ye ken."

"True — verra true," said Tam, "bit while the young may dee the auld must."

"Oh, ay, generally speaking, but though Mains has been far fae strong this mony a lang, it's said, 'A rattlin cairt gangs lang t' the hill,' an' he may live for years yet. At onyrate he wis rael weel fin I wis doon, an' leukin as life like's ony o's."

"Weel, aw'm rael gled t' hear't," said Tam, but it

was in that cold and disappointed kind of tone which really meant that he was very sorry to hear it.

"Ye see," continued Nancy, "fan I was there he hid had that frien' wi' 'im for a week or twa 'at he hidna seen for saivrel years, aw believe, an' aw think he wiz sae gled t' see him 'at he wiz jist like anither crayter athegether. Mair like fat he ees't t' be afore the rheumatics teuk sic a haud o' 'im."

"A frien' bidin' wi' 'im, did ye say — fa cud that hae been? He hisna mony friens 'at ever I heard o'."

"Ae aw thocht ye hid kent a' aboot it. Wisna he roon this wye seein' you tee?"

"Hoo cud I tell ye fither he hid been here or no," said Tam, "afore aw ken fa it wis. Ye speak like a feel, 'oman."

"Weel, it wis jist yer nain cousin, Frank Hepburn—him 'at's been lang at the sea, ye ken. He's a cawptain noo, aw believe. Aw wonner he didna come an' see you. Aw'm sure he's mair sib to you than he is to Mains."

To say the least Tam Paterson was a good deal taken aback at this announcement, for his sordid nature at once led him to believe that the main object of his cousin's visit to Mains of Yonderton, after so long an absence, must be to ingratiate himself with the old man for a selfish and mercenary purpose, and the thought made him very angry.

"Ay," he said, "an' *he* wiz there, wiz he. Na, na, he didna call upo' me—he wid hardly venter t' dee that; an' aw must say aw'm astonish't at his impidence in gaen t' Mains o' Yonnerton aifter bein' sae lang awa' fae't—tryin' till impose on an aul' dottlet man, and mair especially fan he maun hae kent sae weel at fatever fawvour Mrs. Buchan micht hae hed for 'im, Mains himsel' cud never thole the sicht o' 'im aboot the toon. Ae, bit it's a selfish wordle this, an' fouk 'at wid preten' ither things seem t' be the warst."

"Ae," said Nancy, "bit aw think ye maun be wrang aboot Mains haein' ony ill-wull at 'im, for I saw naething to gar ma think that, bit the conterarie. He hid been there for naar three ooks, an' the aul' man appear't t' be that fond o' 'im, 'at instead o' nae likin' the sicht o' 'im aboot the place as ye wiz sayin', he cud hardly thole 'im to be oot o's sicht."

"O, dinna tell me that; that's a' buff an' nonsense. Ye ken brawly it's nae Mains's wye t' haud a fuss o' that kine wi' onybody."

"He wiz makin' nae fuss," said Nancy, "bit aw cud see weel aneuch, an' Eppie, the hoosekeeper, tell't me the same thing, 'at he wiz oncommon weel please't wi' his company. Ye see, Mains is a heap fonder o' news noo than he wiz eense on a day, an' the like o' yer cousin 'at's been in a' the four quarters i' the globe, wid hae a hantle o' queer things to tell 'im."

"Aw've nae doot he's tell't 'im a lot o' big lees," said Tam, very sharply, "fouk 'at's been awa that wye are nae generally remarkable for stickin' t' the trowth."

"Weel, ye see, I ken naething aboot that, bit aw'm seere I may hae a gweed word on 'im ony wye, for aw never met wi' onybody 'at behaved in siccan a handsome mainner t' ma as he did."

"O yea; hoo wiz that?"

"O, weel, ye see, he wiz intennin' t' gang awa the neist day, an' fat did he dee think ye; he jist gied Eppie a praisent o' the verra expensivest article 'at aw had i' ma stock. Saiven an' saxpence wiz the price o't; nae a farthin' less. Bit that wisna a', for he hannet me a half-sovereign in payment o't; an' says he, 'never min' the cheenge; it's a mere trifle—nae worth speakin' aboot.' Noo, I think that show'd 'im t' be a perfec' gintleman; did it no'?"

"Weel," said Tam, "opingons micht differ aboot that. I think it raither showed 'im t' be a perfec' *idiet*.

Bit there's *ae* thing 'at aw wid like t' ken noo, an' it's this —Wiz the aul man aside fin that little bit o' bizzness wiz transakit?"

"Aye, he wiz *that*."

"An' fat did *he* say?"

"O, he saidna verra muckle; bit I cud see brawly 'at he wisna verra weel pleas't; it wiz sae different fae hiz mean wys. Only feint a hair wiz I needin' t' care fither he wiz angry or content; it didna mak' a prein heed to him ae wye or anither. Bit I maun awa'," she continued, "for aw hiv a curn ither jobbies t' atten' till the day; an' aw hinna time t' haiver langer wi' ye."

"Will't be lang ere ye be back in yon quarter again?" asked Tam.

"O, nae verra lang; hae ye ony wird t' sen?"

"Weel," he said, "aw expeck t' be most terrible busy this simmer, an' winna hae gweed winnin' awa fae hame. Aw think aw'll maybe sen' twa three lines o' a letter wi' ye t' the aul' man."

"Ye'll better hae't ready than, an' aw'll cry in for't afore aw leave the toon."

After what he had just heard he was not quite so apprehensive that his pecuniary prospects would suffer from Hepburn's protracted visit to the Mains as he had been at the first blush of the matter, for, from what he knew of old David Buchan's habits, he was of opinion that the small regard for money which his cousin had manifested in his liberality, both to the housekeeper and to Nancy Walker, would go a great way to neutralise any impressions that his previous conduct and conversation might have produced in his favour.

XX.—She gives Mains a Piece of News which rather astonishes him.

THE next time that Nancy Walker reached Mains of Yonderton, she was the bearer of a letter which Tam Paterson thought it advisable to write to his old friend, in order to keep things straight and sweet with him as far as possible.

When she entered the farm kitchen, Eppie was "jottin' aboot" as usual, and Mains was sitting by the ingle nook before a cheerful peat fire—for, even in summer, he now liked to see a good fire. It was comfortable like, and what was more, as moss was plentiful, a good fire cost no more than a bad one. But probably as he grew old his blood was getting thin, so that he might have felt "cauldriffe" at times, even when the weather was comparatively warm. Nancy set down her burden on the floor, and after remarking on the weather and inquiring at old Mains "hoo he wiz keepin'," she commenced fumbling among the contents of her "pack," saying, as she did so, "aw think aw sud hae a bit letter here t'ye fae yer frien' Maister Paterson."

"O, yea," said Mains, "fat's *he* sayin' till't, aw wonner?"

"Weel, aw'm sure I canna tell ye, bit here it is;" and she put it into his hand. Mains then drew his spectacles from one pocket, and from another a somewhat faded-looking cotton handkerchief, with which he wiped the eyes of the spectacles, and, having placed them on his nose — all very deliberately — he opened the letter and began to peruse it in silence. It was as follows:—

"Peterhead, 28th June, 1813.

"Dear Sir,—I take this opportunity of sending you a few lines to let you know that we are all well, hoping

this will find you the same, and the rheumatisms no worse than usual. Trade has been some dull here for a while back. Everybody is complaining about it as well as me, but I hope it will soon revive again. The busy time is just at hand, and if it is a favowrable season I expect to do a good deal of business. I wish I could have got down to see you about this time, but I doubt I will not manage to do that till it be well over in the year, for unless one attend to their business themselves it cannot be expected to pay, and I should make a good bit of money this season if things goes right.

"I was astonished to hear that my cousin, Frank Hepburn, had been seeing you lately. It is strange that he should come now after being so careless of you, and never thinking of you or coming to see you for so many years, though, I believe, he has often been in Aberdeen. I wonder, too, that he did not come and see me when he was so near, but you see he has nothing *to expect from me,* and that accounts for it. Sailors are a strange set altogether. I see a good deal of them in Peterhead here, and the way they behave sometimes, drinking and throwing their money about them, is disgraceful, and I suppose our friend Hepburn is just like the rest of them. From what I have seen, I am certain that the man who allows any spare cash to come into the hands of seafaring men is their worst enemy.

"I hope you have a good appearance on the Mains this season. Prices are good, but being between the crops, I suppose you will not have much to dispose of.

"No more at present, but remains your affectionate friend.

"T. Paterson.

"P.S.—I have given Nancy Walker a penny for taking this letter, so she will not need anything more from you."

This postscript was added that it might contrast favourably with Hepburn's thoughtless liberality to Nancy, and because he knew it would strike Mains as a remarkable instance of the writer's carefulness in small matters, a trait of character which Mr. Buchan always liked to see, as he believed in the saying that if the pence were cared for the pounds would take care of themselves.

During the time that Mains was studying this somewhat remarkable production, the housekeeper and Nancy kept newsing away at the hardest, though the latter found that no business was to be done on this occasion. It was quite clear from the expression of Mains's face, as he folded up the letter again, that he was only half pleased with the contents, but the only remark he made at the time was, "Ay, ay, that P.S. is jist like Tam Paterson; t' be sure it's only a penny, but a penny's the seed o' a poun'. It'll be lang t' the day ere Nancy get half-a-croon oot o' *him*"; but this was spoken in a low tone of voice as if to himself, and was not heard either by Nancy or the housekeeper.

Now it was usual, when Nancy was entrusted with the carrying of a letter in this manner, that, in addition to anything that might have been given by the sender of the letter, she also received some little acknowledgment from the person to whom it was delivered, and more particularly would something of this kind be expected if no purchase was made from her, as was the case on the present occasion. Mains, however, showed no signs of bringing out the expected copper, and, as she did not like broadly to ask for anything of the nature of a gratuity, she continued to sit and carry on the news, while now and again, with the intention of bringing him to the point if possible, she would say—"Weel, sirs, but I maun awa' though, for it winna dee t' sit here a' day," and after a while, "weel bit aw'm railly nae wise t' be sittin' clatterin' awa here, an' me hiz sic a lang road

afore ma. Ye hiv naething mair t' say to me, aw suppose, afore aw gang?" But hints would not do, and she saw that she must either be more definite or else lose what she considered herself fairly entitled to. The matter was therefore urgent, and in a case of the kind it was really no use standing on ceremonies with a man like Mains, so she took up her "pack," and was making for the door, when she turned to him abruptly and said, "Weel, if the bringin' o' that letter t' ye a' the wye fae Peterhead be worth onything, ye'll better come awa' wi' 't."

"The letter's nae worth a dite t' me," said Mains, "an' aw think ye cud hardly expeck t' be pay't a second time for a thing o' that kine sae seen aifter gettin' sic a soom o' money as ye gat fae Maister Hepburn the last time 'at ye wiz here, for naething ava but jist some idle blarney 'at ye rattlet aff till 'im aboot mindin' on 'im fan he eest t' come t' this toon lang syne."

"Dear me, Mains," said Nancy, "hinna ye gotten ower that *yet* man. Aw hid amaist forgotten aboot it masel', 'at aw do believe 'at Maister Hepburn 'imsel' wid hardly mine 'at he hid deen sic a thing though he waur here this moment. Bit fat d' ye mean be ma bein' pay't a second time?"

"Fat div aw mean?" said Mains, once more referring to the letter which he held in his hand, "this is fat aw mean, see—'P.S.—I hiv given Nancy Walker a penny for takin' this letter, so that she'll need nothing more from you'—ha, ha, Nancy 'oman, ye didna ken 'at that wiz here aw doot!"

"An' he's actually been at the pains t' pit doon that hiz he? Weel, the de'il a marra o' that 'at *ever* aw saw. Aw aye kent 'at Tam Paterson was a low life't greedy slype, but railly that iz carryin' the thing till a pitch 'at aw wid hae never thocht ony man cawpable o'. An' fat his a' his meanness and chaitry come till? It's weel kent

the man's a bankrip at this praisent moment. Naething 'at he pits his han' till seems t' prosper—the like o' 'im cudna expect to thrive."

"Fat d' ye say," said Mains very sharply. "Od, 'oman, ye'll better tak' care hoo ye speak. I tell ye Maister Paterson's been verra successfu' in business, an' maun be worth a hantle o' siller b' this time. Though he's maybe been gey sharp wi' ye aboot this letter, that's nae rizzon for you sayin' things caulkilatit t' blaud his character."

"An' I tell ye *again,"* said Nancy in a louder tone, " 'at he's an oot an' oot bankrupt. It's weel kent t' a'body in Peterhead 'at he's been hingin' b' the breears o' his een this twallmonth an' mair, an' iv ye wid like t' ken the rizzon 'at his creiditors hiv latten 'im hing sae lang, maybe aw cud tell ye that tee."

Mains's confidence in the hitherto undoubted stability of his friend was naturally a wee bit shaken when he saw the unhesitating manner in which she spoke, and he could only say—"Weel, fat d'ye say is the rizzon—lat's hear ye 'oman."

"Weel it's jist this," she said, "he's led them a' t' believe 'at he's t' fa' heir t' a' 'at ye hae fan ye dee, an' that, as ye're an aul' frail man, iv they'll only hae patience for a whilie, he'll seen be able t' pay a'body fat he's auchten them, an' aifter a' be better aff 'imsel' than ever he wiz, whereas, if they waur t' push 'im enoo, they ken brawly they cudna mak' mair oot o' 'im than maybe a shillin' i' the poun' at the ootside. *That's* ye're carefu' money makin' frien' 'at ye think sic a heap o'—bit I maun awa'," she continued, "an' ye can jist chaw yer queed on fat I've been tellin' ye, for it's as true as ye're a leevin' man at this moment."

XXI.—David Buchan Ruminates.

When Nancy Walker had "clear't her crap" at Tam Paterson, as described in the concluding portion of the preceding chapter, she whisked up her "pack" and bounced out at the door, leaving David Buchan and his housekeeper the only occupants of the farm kitchen — the former in a state of complete bewilderment at the statements he had just heard, and the latter with a feeling of intense inward satisfaction at the thorough manner in which the hypocritical pretensions of Tam Paterson had been exposed; for she was satisfied that, as suspicion must now be awakened, her master would not rest till he had ascertained the precise truth of Nancy's statements. It was a few moments before Mains himself could collect his thoughts sufficiently to make any audible observation on what had taken place, but, when he did find his tongue, he said to Eppie, "I'se assure ye that's a bessie can gie fowk their come again to some purpose fan her birse is fairly up."

"Tye," said Eppie, "she may hae mony failins, bit Nancy's never at a loss for an answer; an' she'll aye hae the last word wi' ye in spite o' yer neck."

"O, aw aye kent she wiz weel shod i' the gab; the like o' 'er needs to be that; but aw never thocht 'at she wiz siccan a spitfire o' a craetur as yon ootbirst shows 'er to be."

"Weel, bit ye maun aloo," said Eppie, "'at she had gweed cause t' be offenit, for it wiz a mean dirty thing on Maister Paiterson's pairt t' pit the like o' yon in his letter for the sake o' deprivin' the peer body o' a penny—that wiz surely little aneuch for 'er tribble."

"O, ay, I admit 'at it wiz hardly worth his while," said Mains; "only I micht hae gien the 'oman her penny aifter a', if she hid hid a meenit's patience, bit she flew into sic a reed het pawshon 'at aw hid na 't i' ma pooer though aw had been intennin' t' dee't. Bit aw wonner, noo, gin it can be true fat she said aboot Tam's affairs."

"True!" said Eppie: "I'se warren it's true, ilka word o't. T' be sure aw never heard 'im ca'ad a bankrup sae plain an' plump oot as Nancy did it enoo, bit aw've heard hints t' the same effec' mony a time, an' ye ken 'there's aye some water faur the stirkie droons.' "

But David Buchan's inward reflections on the state of matters now revealed were of a much more serious description. The packwoman had told him to "chaw his queed" on what she had told him, and, in that one particular at least, he took her advice, for he did "ruminate" long and anxiously on the startling information that had just come to his knowledge.

His model business man, Tam Paterson! Could it be possible that his pecuniary affairs were in the state described by Nancy Walker? At one time he was inclined to disbelieve it, and attribute the statement to malice on the part of his informant, but, on the other hand, when he remembered the bold and positive manner in which it had been put forward, he feared there must be some truth in it, though matters might not be so bad as she had represented them to be. He now remembered his asking for a loan of three hundred pounds some time previously, a circumstance which, from the gloss put upon it at the time, he did not think very much about, but when he began now to "put that and that together," the incident appeared to him in an unfavourable light. One thing, however, he resolved upon, and that was that he must get to the bottom of the matter in some way or another, though how to proceed in ascertaining the real facts he was not quite so certain,

for he could not go the length of Peterhead himself, and no one occurred to him that he could make his confident in the matter.

A few weeks passed away and Mains had not succeeded in obtaining any further information of a reliable nature, but, at the end of that time, and without going over his own door, he learned what could not fail to convince him that Nancy's account of the state of Tam Paterson's affairs was substantially correct. It happened in this way. When Tam borrowed the money from Gibbie Ramsay, as explained in a former chapter, he did so for a specific purpose, but, being much pressed for cash at the time he got the three hundred pounds into his hands, he had been compelled to pay the greater part of it away in order to satisfy the demands of some creditors who were threatening to bring matters to a crisis. But although he succeeded for a time in averting this, when the season came round that he should have been making considerable outlays in connection with the scheme for which the money was borrowed, he was again in the position of a man without capital for the undertaking, and thus another, and as it turned out the last, opportunity of bettering his position and retrieving his fortunes was lost.

XXII.—Gibbie Ramsay pays Mains a Visit.

When Gibbie Ramsay saw how matters stood, he began to accuse himself of stupidity in having lent the money without exercising sufficient caution, and as it was now but too evident that the amount was lost so far as the principal debtor was concerned, he naturally turned his thoughts to the quarter whence he had been led to look for relief in the event that was now certain to happen. Not that he expected Mains to repay the three hundred pounds during his lifetime; he knew better than to think of such a thing; but he was anxious to ascertain, if he could, whether Tam Paterson's prospects in that quarter were really such as he had represented them to be. He had some friends who resided at no great distance from Mains of Yonderton, so he resolved to pay a visit to them, and at the same time take the opportunity of calling upon David Buchan, to see if he could manage to get anything out of him. Before he started on this mission, he took care to put in his pocket a letter he had received from Tam Paterson about the cash he had advanced him, and also the acknowledgment he had got from him when he handed him the money.

Gibbie was a well-to-do farmer body like Mains himself, and he easily contrived to give such a complexion to his visit as to make it appear that he had come in the ordinary way of business, and without any such purpose as that which was really the object of his call. So after talking for a while as if he was desirous of purchasing some "nowt," which he had no intention of

buying, and which Mains was by no means anxious to sell, he appeared to give up the idea of being able to conclude a bargain, and cautiously approached the subject that was all the while uppermost in his mind by saying, "There's an acquaintance o' mine in Peterhead 'at aw've aften heard mention your name."

"Yea. Fa's that?" said Mains.

"Maister Paterson, the merchan'," answered Gibbie.

"O, ye're acquant wi' him, are ye?"

"I am so," he said. "I've kent 'im ay wye or anither sin' ever he cam t' Peterhead, aw daursay. In fac' his wife's a far aff frien' o' ma nain."

Mains felt that a likely time had now come for ascertaining what amount of truth there might be in the extraordinary rumours that he had heard about Tam's pecuniary circumstances, and he continued the conversation by saying—"O yea, ye've kent 'im a' that time hiv ye? An' hoo's he gettin' on d'ye think?"

"O weel, jist bit middlin' only, aw doot."

"Weel, ye ken," said Mains, " 'at aw heard something t' that effeck a few weeks syne for the first time, an' aw wiz never mair astonish't i' me life. Aw cud hardly bring masel' t' believe't, for aw ey thocht he wiz deein' rael weel. An' is't railly the case 'at he's in diffickwelties for wint o' siller?"

"Weel a wat, it's ower true," said Gibbie, "an' it's a sair maitter 'at such should be the case, bit he'll maybe come a' richt again by an' by."

"An' fat's been the cause o't?" said Mains. "Hiz 'e met wi' ony losses?"

"Weel, I suppose he's hid his share o' *them* like ither fowk, bit he hisna jist manage't verra weel in some things, an' in ither things he's been unfortunate, fae nae blame o's nain, aw daursay; an' the consequence is 'at he fin's 'imsel' gey an' ticht i' the money wye, an' his credit's gey sair shaken."

"An' ken ye onything aboot fa his creditors are syne?"

"Weel," said Gibbie, with a modest simper on his face, "that brings ma t' speak o' masel', a thing which aw never like t' dee iv aw can help it, bit the fact is that I lent 'im three hunner poun' for a partikler purpose about a twalmonth syne. Aw refees't 'im at first, bit aifter he tell't me o' your gweed intentions till 'im in the event o' ye wearin' awa', aw thocht aw saw ma wye till obleege 'im, an' gaed 'im the siller; bit noo it's disappear't wi' the lave, an' he can gie nae accoont o't whatsomever."

This reference to Mains's posthumous intentions was rather skilfully conceived, for, doubtless, Gibbie Ramsay believed that he would thus surprise him into saying something that would amount either to an admission or a denial of what it was his main object to ascertain, and, had it not been that the information previously obtained from Nancy Walker enabled him to understand at once what was referred to, the probability is that he would have walked into the trap thus laid for him, but instead of doing so, he was on his guard, and merely said in an indifferent kind of tone, "it seerly lay far oot o's wye t' be speakin' o' ony intentions o' mine till a compairitive strainger. Ye maun seerely be in some mistak' aboot that bit o't."

"De'il a mistak' is there aboot it," said Gibbie, "an' if ye dinna tak' my word for't, aw'm nae verra sure bit I can lat ye see his *nain* words upo' the subject," and with that he thrust his hand deeply into a big "oxter pooch" inside his waistcoat, and drew from thence a well-worn pocket-book, the contents of which he proceeded to examine, and, having found what he wanted, he said, "aye, here it is," and he handed a letter to Mains, saying as he did so, "see, tak' a look o' *that*, man, an' tell me iv ye think aw'm in ony mistak'."

Mains took the letter and perused it attentively. It was in the following terms:—

"Peterhead, 12th Sept., 1812.

"Mr. Gilbert Ramsay,

"Dear Sir,—Referring to the loan of £300 which I asked from you a short time ago to start the herring curing concern, you will recollect, I suppose, that you said you was willing to lend me the money if I could give you any security for it. Now, though I cannot give you security of the usual kind at present, I have learned something since I saw you which I think will show you that you will be quite safe in lending me the money. I have just returned from seeing my old friend David Buchan in Mains of Yonderton, and he told me that he has made his will, leaving all his money to me, which I am sure must amount to a pretty round sum—probably between three or four thousand pounds. Now, though this is nothing more than I expected, yet it is satisfactory to be told it out of his own mouth. Perhaps you will say I should have asked the loan from him, but he is a grippy, miserly kind of a man, and has been so ever since I knew him, and to ask any money from him now might do me harm afterwards. I may tell you further that Mr. Buchan is old and very frail, being much broken down with rheumatisms and other ailments, and I am sure he cannot live long. I hope, therefore, that when I have the *certainty* of coming into the possession of so much money *very soon*, you will be willing to accommodate me with what I so urgently require in the meantime.—I am, &c.

"T. Paterson."

After reading this precious epistle he returned it to Gibbie Ramsay, who, as he replaced it in his pocket-book, said, "Noo, bide or I lat ye see fat followed upo' that letter," and he proceeded again to rummage in the

book for the acknowledgment which Tam Paterson had granted to him for the money; but as the book was quite full of papers of different sorts, and the one he wanted was quite a little slip, he did not succeed in finding it very readily. "Aw'm quite certain it's here," he said, "for aw put it in the streen wi' ma ain han'." But as it still eluded his search, he took the whole contents out of the pocket-book, and proceeded to pass them through his hand one by one, laying them on the table as he did so, till they formed a little pile on the edge of it. Having at last lighted on the document, he handed it over to Mains for examination, but, as he drew back his arm, his elbow accidentally came in contact with the papers he had placed on the table, knocking the whole of them on the floor close to the side of the chair on which he sat, when he immediately leant over the arm of the chair and picked them up again, returning them to the pocket-book. A very slight examination of the acknowledgment satisfied Mains that the three hundred pounds had been lent as stated, and as he returned the paper Gibbie continued—"You see that acknowledgment's dated only twa days aifter the letter, an' I can tell ye fat it is, if it hadna been for fat he says in the letter aboot his prospects in this quarter, he should hae never finger't a bawbee o' the siller." He said no more, but looked into David Buchan's face, evidently watching with some interest the effect of the communication he had made to him, and anxious to hear what he should say on the subject.

On the unexpected discovery of the whole-hearted hypocrisy and base selfishness, such as Tam Paterson's letter brought to light, most men would have completely lost their temper, and denounced the writer there and then as a mean, low-spirited cur, who, they would now take very good care, should never be a penny the richer of anything that they might leave; but although he felt

quite disposed to behave in this manner, and had some difficulty in repressing his resentment, he knew that would only hasten Tam Paterson's downfall, a thing which he had no desire to do. Accordingly, he seemed to take the matter quite coolly, merely saying, "I daur-say aw *did* tell him something like fat he says in that letter, the last time 'at he wiz up, bit, as ye may easy oonerstan', the information was intended for 'imsel' aleen. Aw most say aw canna help feelin' a wee thing disappointit at the eese he mak's o't in his letter t' you."

From the terms made use of, as well as from the mild manner in which they were spoken, Gibbie took it for granted that it must be all right. "Weel," he said, it maybe wisna richt o' me t' lat ye see the letter, bit, of coorse, ye'll never lat on aboot it t' Maister Paterson; an' he wiz maybe t' be exkees't for vreetin' 't, for fin a body's presst for siller, they're sometimes force't t' dee things 'at, at ither times, they wid be asham't o'."

XXIII.—Mains alters his Tes'ment.

When Gibbie took leave, Mains began seriously to consider the whole circumstances of the case, and his reflections were not of the most pleasant description. It was quite evident from Tam Paterson's letter that he regarded Mains in the light of an obstacle between him and so much *money*, and that the most welcome news that Tam could hear regarding him would be to see him "streikit." The discovery completely opened his eyes to the true character of the man, and, though he had been as well off as Mains previously believed him to be, the probability is that he would have rearranged matters in such a way as to completely disappoint his expectations. But when he reflected further on the probability of his money—the accumulated savings of his lifetime—falling into the hands of Tam Paterson's creditors, the bare idea of such a thing was too terrible to be thought of, so that he had no hesitation whatever as to the course it was his duty to adopt; and that was to make a fresh settlement of his affairs, leaving the bulk of his property to Frank Hepburn, who had been in high favour with Mains since the time of his recent visit.

Gibbie Ramsay had been gone for about two hours, and David Buchan still sat reflecting on the state of matters that had just come to his knowledge, when his eye lighted on what seemed to be a letter lying beneath the chair which Gibbie had recently vacated. He took it up and examined it, and was amused to find that it was the identical letter from Tam Paterson which Gibbie had shown him, with the contents of which the reader has

just been made acquainted. He saw at once how it had come there — it had fallen on the floor with the other contents of the pocket-book as already explained, but, as it had gone partly underneath the chair, it had escaped Gibbie Ramsay's notice when he picked up the others, and it was left lying on the spot where it had fallen. Mains's first feeling was that he should return it at once to its rightful owner, but on second thoughts he resolved that he would not be at the trouble to do so. "If he misses 't an' comes back for't," he said, "he sall get it b' a' means, bit it's railly nae o' ony vailue t' him or ony ither body, an' as it refaars for the maist pairt t' my private affairs I'se jist lock it past i' the meantime."

Since Mains had become so frail, the minister, who was a very systematic man, had been in the habit of calling at stated intervals, and, as he expected to see him in a few days, he resolved to wait till then, and once more take the benefit of his advice under the altered circumstances.

When Mr. Mair called, Mains told him how completely he had been deceived hitherto in Tam Paterson's character and actings. He also explained what he had learned as to the unsatisfactory state of his affairs, informing him at the same time of the tenor of the letter that had been shown to him by Gibbie Ramsay, and his consequent determination to bequeath his means and estate to Frank Hepburn; to all of which Mr. Mair listened attentively, and gave sound and judicious advice.

"It was very foolish of you," he began by saying, "to inform this fellow Paterson of the nature of the settlement you have made. I would have thought that a man of your shrewdness and well-known caution would have acted more discreetly."

"Weel, d'ye ken, sir," said Mains, " 'at the thocht occurr't t' ma at the time 'at aw micht be deein' an onwise thing, an' aw dinna ken fat wye aw wiz sae stupit, for the

words waur nae seener oot o' ma mou' than aw repentit, but it wiz ower late, ye see, the ill had been deen."

"However," said Mr. Mair, "as things have come about it is of less consequence. In fact, the circumstance, from the use he has attempted to make of the information you gave him, will probably have the effect of preventing your property from falling into unworthy hands. I need hardly say," he continued, "that I approve generally of the change you propose to make, but there are one or two little matters which it will be necessary for you to consider—as for example, this young man Hepburn is a sailor, who at the time of your decease may be thousands of miles from here, and it will be necessary that you name executors resident in this quarter; also as Paterson may be disposed to give some trouble in consequence of what he has been told by yourself — very foolishly as I think — I would strongly recommend you to have your new settlement prepared by Mr. Corbie, the factor, who is a sharp man of business, and will take care that it is all correct and in proper form."

Probably Mr. Mair may have had some doubts in his own mind whether the "form of a will" he had been in the habit of using would hold water in the event of its validity being tested in a court of law, and he wisely advised the employment of a properly qualified legal practitioner.

"Bit hoo can that be manage't," said Mains. "Ye ken brawly 'at aw'm nae able t' gang t' Peterhead t' see the factor, an' the expense o' bringin' 'im doon here eence earan canna be thocht o'."

"That is not at all necessary," said Mr. Mair. "It can be managed in this way. I myself will inform him of the circumstances without delay, and explain to him what your wishes are, so that he can prepare the document at any time, and bring it with him when he comes to collect the rents at the Lammas term, which will soon

be here. Then, if you are at all able, you should attend personally at the collection, when you could sign the paper, and nobody will ever be a bit the wiser of what you have done."

This advice pleased Mains remarkably well—further particulars were adjusted, and in due time all was carried out as proposed, for when the collection of rents came round, Mains professed great anxiety to see the factor about the scouring of a march ditch that had long been in a very bad state, so he insisted on going himself to pay his half-year's rent, and the other little bit of business was accomplished at the same time.

XXIV.—The End Approaches.

After the harvest had been gathered in, and when cold November came with chilling blasts, Mains, who had felt rather better than ordinary during the summer and autumn, had an illness which he never altogether got the better of, for, although he rallied for a time, he never gathered strength again, and was ever after confined to the house. In justice to Eppie Watson, the housekeeper, we must admit that she showed the utmost attention to her master's comfort during this long and tedious illness. We have the more pleasure in recording this from the fact that not only had she long ago abandoned all matrimonial designs upon him, but it was believed that she had prospects of this nature in another quarter, for rumour had it that a small crofter, not far from Mains of Yonderton, who had recently lost his wife, had made her an offer of marriage, believing, as he did, that it would be a better and more economical arrangement to have an active, managing woman like Eppie in the capacity of a wife rather than that of a housekeeper. But when their future plans had been so far arranged, with that shrewd foresight which usually characterises the peasantry of Buchan, they mutually agreed, in the view of Mains's daily increasing frailty, to postpone their union for a time, lest Eppie's prospects of a comfortable provision under her master's settlement should suffer if she left his services and allowed another to step into her place.

At the beginning of Mains's illness, the symptoms were so alarming that the doctor deemed it his duty to

tell him that he did not think he was in a good way; and Mains's first feeling on being told of his danger was one of thankfulness that a settlement of his affairs had been made some time previously, for he felt that if it had been to do after he had become so poorly, it could not have been managed so well or so quietly as it had been. But even in the near prospect of entering on another state of existence, his habitual care about the concerns of the present life did not forsake him. This was very manifest from a conversation he had with his housekeeper on the evening of the same day, and she was seated by the fire in the room where her master was lying, intending to sit with him until she should see whether he was to get any sleep, when Mains, who appeared to be revolving some matters of importance in his mind, said, "The doctor disna like ma ava this time, Eppie—he wiz tellin' ma 'at he dootit this bit turnie 'at aw've teen wid be gey sair upo' me."

"Weel, aw cudna say," said Eppie, "aw think aw've seen ye as ill afore noo, an' maybe in a day or twa ye'll jist haud a wee thingie better again."

"Weel, it's hard to say," said Mains; "we maun jist trust t' Providence, bit ma strength's sair awa wi't, an' the aul'er 'at aw'm growin', aw fin 'at aw'm the less able t' fecht wi' a thing o' this kine."

Eppie said something about "aul' age nae comin' it leen," and they both relapsed into silence for a few seconds, after which Mains continued—

"Iv I wiz happenin' t' wear awa, of course it'll be Maister Corbie, the factor, 'at 'ill hae t' dee fatever may be necessar' aboot my maitters; an' aw wiz jist minin' 'at there's een or twa bits o' things 'at he winna ken o' 'cep you or some ither body be at han' till instruc' 'im."

"Noo, noo," said Eppie to herself, "aw've been lang ill aboot kennin fu things are t' be leeft. Aw'll maybe mak' oot t' leern something noo if aw manage richt."

And she declared her readiness to put the factor in possession of whatever information Mains might confide to her, when the proper time came for doing so.

"Weel," said Mains, "fan he comes to ascerteen hoo things stan', ye'll mine t' tell 'im 'at yon crafter bodie, Peter Watt, at the fit o' the hill o' Dudwick, him 'at bocht the brannet coo fae ma aboot this time fernye'r, is still due twa poun' o' the price o' 'er. The price wiz t' be ten poun', bit he only pay't aucht fan he teuk 'er awa, an' there's nae rizzon fu' he sud be latten aff wi' the balance, for he hid a rael gweed bargain o' 'er. An' syne the blacksmith 'ill be pitten' in his account for jobbies 'at he's deen i' the coorse o' the year—it 'ill likely be a' richt aneuch, bit there's fifteen shillin's t' come aff o't for half-a-bow o' ait seed 'at he gat i' the spring—maybe he wid explain aboot that 'imsel', bit it's jist as weel 'at ye sud ken aboot it in case be. Weel, as far as I mine, there's only ae ither thing 'at there can be ony mistak' wi', an' that's the herd laddie's wauges. They're a poun' i' the half-year, bit a sud tell ye 'at fin his mither wiz here seein' 'im i' the simmer time, at her ain request, I advance't 'er sax shillin's t' help t' get a pair o' sheen till 'im, so 'at he hiz only fourteen shillin's t' get at the Mairtimas term."

From the importance he seemed to attribute to what he was about to communicate, Eppie had expected something very different from this, and she could not help saying, in a tone of disappointment, "An' is *that* a' ye hid t' say t' ma?"

"Aw think sae," said Mains, "as far as I can mine, a' ither thing's on black an' fite i' the dask there, an' 'ill speak for itsel'."

"Weel," she said, "aw think aifter fat the doctor tell't ye the day, there micht be some ither thing i' yer heed than maitters o' that kin' — jist the merest trifles, hardly worth min'n aboot at *ony* time, bit especially in

yer praisent circumstances. It wid be mair like the thing if ye wid sen' for the minister t' come an' speak t' ye aboot anither wordle, an' gie ye a prayer."

"Weel," said Mains, "aw'm seere I've nae objections t' see the minister. Aw think it wid be verra proper, bit iv aw'm as near anither wordle as the doctor seems to think, it's seerly mair ma deuty than at ony ither time t' mak' a'thing richt an' straucht for the praisent wordle as far as possible."

"Ay, bit sma' trifles like yon," she said; "aw wonner 'at ye cud think o' sic things an' you sae onweel."

"Weel, bit dinna ye see 'at it's jist little thingies o' yon kine 'at *need* t' be leukit aifter; things o' mair importance are nae near sae likely t' be overleukit"; and, knowing by the manner in which Eppie had spoken, that she felt disappointed at him, and was probably looking upon him as an old hard-hearted sinner, grasping at the world, although he was so soon to leave it and all its concerns, he proceeded in an apologetic tone—"Ye can sen' word t' Mr. Mair t' leuk in aboot iv ye hae a mine, bit he canna dee me ony gweed; only aw've been a weel-deein' honest man a' ma days, Eppie. Though aw ey liket t' get a' 'at aw wiz inteetle't till, aw wiz jist as partiklar in geein' a'body their nain. Nae-body can say 'at ever Dawvid Buchan defrawtit them o' a bawbee till's knowledge, an' fan a man can railly and truly say that, it's mair t' the purpose, aw'm thinkin', fan the en' comes, than ony o' Maister Mair's prayers, for aw doot they're some gweedless ill-less kine, like the priests' holy watter."

Eppie felt no disposition to press her views further, and the conversation was allowed to drop.

XXV.—A Hasty Call.

No sooner did Tam Paterson learn that his friend Mains was seriously ill, than he hastened up to see him, thinking, no doubt (we shall not say hoping), that the end might be at hand, for, as a matter of course, he was quite ignorant of the fact that a complete change had been made in the destination of the property. As may well be supposed, the old man received him coldly, but Tam did not perceive it, for he attributed the indifference which he manifested to his presence to the trouble that was on him.

"I'm rael vex't," said Tam, as he stood by the bedside, "t' see ye sae sair awa' wi't."

Mains only answered by a low moan—there was no articulate utterance.

"Hae ye muckle pain?"

"Sometimes," was the only reply.

"Weel, is there onything 'at ye wid like t' say t' me as lang's aw'm here?"

"Naething," said Mains, "speakin' diz me a dail o' ill. Aw'm not able t' speak nor yet 't hear speakin'," but, at the same time, there was a strength and a firmness in his voice that seemed to belie his words.

"Well," said Tam, "aw'm sure it maun be a grite comfort t' ye t' think 'at things are sattle't. The last time 'at I wiz here ye wiz tellin' ma, ye mine, 'at yer wull hid been made, an' 'at a'thing wiz in order for fatever micht happen."

"O aye," he said in a feeble tone of voice, "a'thing's sattle't, an', as ye say, it's a grite comfort t' ma t' ken 'at it is sae, bit I'se warren some fouk 'ill meet wi' a sair disappointment fan they come to ken hoo things are leeft."

Tam believed that this remark could only apply to his cousin, Frank Hepburn, and he made answer, "O weel, ye see, it's nonsense t' try to please a'body. A man his a perfec' richt t' dee wi' hiz ain as he likes 'imsel', an' ma cousin maun ken brawly 'at he hiz nae cleem upo' you." Mains could hardly suppress a chuckle at this observation, and he was forced to partially conceal his face with the bedclothes as he made answer,—"O weel, iv ye speak o' ha'in a *cleem,* aw daursay there's nae muckle difference atween ye in that respect—but I fin' 'at aw'm speakin' ower muckle, an' the doctor tells ma aw maun hae perfec' quateness, so we canna say mair aboot it i' the meantime."

Tam stayed till next day, and before leaving he made another attempt to converse with Mains about money matters, but failed to elicit a single word, and the old man felt a sense of relief when he took his departure, though he made no remark. But it was a noticeable circumstance that though he professed to be unable to speak to Tam Paterson, he was quite able freely to converse with the foreman the same evening as to what work had been going on outside during the day, and to give him distinct instructions about what was to be done on the morrow.

The winter of 1813-14 was a very trying one for weakly people. From the month of November to the middle of March there was a succession of severe frosts and snow, alternated with raw, wet weather, and it is well known that the sudden changes in the temperature thus produced are the worst possible for persons of a rheumatic tendency. The consequence was that although Mains did get partially over the attack which had caused the doctor considerable uneasiness, yet he had a very "dowie" time of it all through the winter. One day he would be able to be up and the next day not. At one time he would be comparatively free from pain,

and at another he would be crying out in agony. From these repeated attacks of his complaint, his strength manifestly declined, and as the spring of 1814 was advancing, and just as he was hoping that the advent of milder weather might once more recruit his health, he died quite suddenly one day in the act of getting out of bed. Eppie heard something fall heavily, and ran ben to see what had happened. She was greatly alarmed to find the old man lying on the floor before the bed, and from the death-like pallor of his countenance, she feared that something very serious had happened. She attempted to raise him, but, finding that she was unable to do so, ran to fetch assistance, but before help arrived, poor old Mains had ceased to live. It was thought that the heart had become affected, and that a sudden spasm had cut him off; but heart disease was little known in those days, although in the busy, bustling times in which we live it has become alarmingly common.

The startling suddenness of Mains's death made a deep impression in the district, but he had been too selfish in his disposition and modes of dealing to be well liked, and on that account there was not so much sympathy or regret expressed as was usually the case when an old residenter in the parish was taken away. Nevertheless, for two or three days it formed the leading topic of conversation, particularly with the female part of the community, and the following conversation between the goodwives of the neighbouring farm towns, who happened to forgather, may serve to show the view that was generally taken of the circumstances:—

"Isna that a haisty call 'at Mains his gotten?" the one said.

"Ae, ay, peeir man," the other replied. "It's terrable t' be call't awa jist in a *moment*, withoot haein time t' think a thocht or utter a word. It's railly joodgment like."

"Ay, weel, lang an' sair did he fecht an' wutter, scrapin' the wordle thegither; bit it's a' ower noo, an' fat eese is his siller till 'im the day?"

"Weel, ye may say that, for a' 'at he hid, it cudna gie 'im mair days fan his time cam', nayther cud he tak ony o' 't wi' 'im."

"It's jist een o' the things 'at I cood never oonerstan' fat objec' the lik o' *him* cood hae hid in beein' sae grippy an' near 'imsel'. Aw cud see some sense in a man 't hiz a young faimily growin' up aboot 'im, tryin' t' save something, bit a man like Mains 'at hid nayther wife nor bairn, nor, ye may say, kythe nor kin belongin' 'im, t' be sae sair glue't t' the wordle as he wiz, it's railly awfu' t' think o't."

"Weel, aw wonner if he's left a wull noo?"

"O, tye, aw'm thinkin' he hiz. The goodman wiz jist speakin' aboot that the streen, an' he wiz sayin' it's generally thocht 't ane Paterson is t' be the heir. He's in some wye o' deein' aboot Peterheed, an' wiz a far aff frien' o' the wife's."

"Weel, I'se tell ye fat it is, gin Eppie Watson binna leeft something worth while, she'll be muckle disappintit, for they say she wid hae been mairret a year or twa syne, bit she's been ey expeckin' Mains t' dee, an' that wye she wisna willin' t' leave 'im for fear 'at she micht cut 'irsel' oot o' her legacy."

"Gin that be the wye o't she'll get her plans cairriet oot noo than; an' if she's left as muckle's be a bit tocher till 'er, she'll be a' the mair thocht o'."

"Aweel, them 'at taks Eppie Watson wid *need* t' get something alang wi' 'er, for she's nae a beouty; an' I'se warren 'er atween forty and fifty—at onyrate it's easy t' be seen 'at she's nae a chucken." And the two laughed heartily, as ladies are apt to do when spiteful remarks are made about the age or personal appearance of one of their sex when she happens to be absent.

XXVI.—Tam Paterson Thinks Himself Slighted.

As soon as Eppie had recovered her presence of mind after the shock her feelings had sustained at witnessing the sudden death of her master, she sent to the manse to inform Mr. Mair of what had happened, and he, being aware how matters had been left, forthwith despatched a messenger to Peterhead with a note to the factor, Mr. Corbie, in which he informed him of the death of his client, and added that he must judge as to what it would be proper to do in the circumstances. Mr. Corbie, with the usual sharpness of gentlemen of his profession, saw at once that this would be a good fat executry, and a case in which there was little likelihood of his business account being too closely scrutinised, so, with the view of "laying it on," he at once made a special journey to the Mains to seal up the "repositories" of the deceased, and to make the necessary arrangements for the funeral—not forgetting, of course, to debit a charge of five guineas for the job on his return to Peterhead, before Tam Paterson so much as heard of the change that had taken place. It was on a Wednesday that Mains died, and Tam had no knowledge of the fact till the Friday following, and even then he learned it accidentally from a person whom he happened to meet in Peterhead who came from a farm adjoining the Mains. Great was his astonishment and indignation at this neglect, as he supposed it to be, on the part of the housekeeper, in not communicating with him immediately, and his mean and suspicious nature could only attribute it to a desire that she must have to keep him in the dark for a time, in order that she might have an opportunity of helping herself to some of the

old man's effects before he—his heir and executor—could have an opportunity of preventing her. In this view of the matter time was precious, so he hurried up with all possible speed, taking care, before he left, to don his best black suit, and to surround his hat with a deep band of crape, which was surely the least that he could do out of respect to the memory of one who, though no blood relation, was yet, by his posthumous generosity, to be the means of raising him to a position of wealth and independence, and, moreover, he did not intend to return home until after the funeral.

When he reached the place he found Eppie moving about as usual, though her countenance wore that subdued aspect which people have when there is a corpse in the house.

"Ay," he said, "an' the aul' man's worn awa' at last."

"O, ay," said Eppie, "he's awa'."

"Fan did it happen?"

"On Wednesday foreneen."

"An' fat wye didna ye think o' lattin' me ken as seen's it happen't. Aw widna hae kent 'at sic a thing had teen place yet, an' aw hidna chance't t' see a man fae this neeborheed 'at tell't me."

Now, though the housekeeper had a cordial dislike to Tam Paterson, she thought it best to be civil, for as yet she was ignorant of how Mains had left his affairs, and believed that Tam might have it in his power to deal generously with her or otherwise, though she felt, at the same time, if her prospects depended on *his* generosity, very little was to be expected. In answer to this question, therefore, why she did not send word to him as soon as her master expired, she said, "Weel, railly, it happen't so suddent, an' I wiz jist in siccan a feerich 'at it never occurr't t' ma t' sen' word t' you or ony ither body, bit the minister."

"The minister!" said Tam. "It's keerious 'at ye thocht o' sennin' word t' him raither than t' me."

"Aw kent 'at the maister wiz i' the wye o' consultin' Mr. Mair aboot his maitters; an' syne the manse is jist at the door compare't wi' Peterhead."

"Bit fat cud Mr. Mair dee? Aw dinna suppose 'at *he* wid pit 'imsel' t' ony tribble i' the maitter."

"O, bit he did though, for as seen as he heard fat hid happen't, he sent aff express for Mr. Corbie, the factor, an' he cam' here yesterday foreneen an' pat a seal upo' the dask, an' a' ither place 'at he thocht likly t' conteen siller or valables."

"Od, it's verra strange," said Tam, " 'at he sud tak' it upon 'im t' dee such a thing without consultin' *me*."

"It's railly been verra dis-convainient," continued Eppie. "There's jist the streen I wiz needin' some bawbees t' pay for een or twa bits o' things, an' aw gaed till a drawer far aw kent the maister 'eest t' keep an auld pocket buik wi' a pucklie notes intill't—bit na, na, there wiz nae admittance. A'thing wiz lockit an' sclatch't o'er wi' sealin' wax besides—siccar aneuch."

"Weel," said Tam, "it's maybe jist as weel aifter a' 'at it wiz sae, but, at the same time, it's nevertheless a piece of onwarrantable interference on Maister Corbie's pairt."

"He's made a' the arreengements for the funeral tee," said Eppie; "it's to be on Tyseday."

"Is't possible? Weel, aw'm mair nor astonish't at the man's impidence, bit he canna be awaur 'at aw'm the only execkiter, an' 'at there's naebody hiz ony richt t' interfere without my orders."

"He disna seem to be verra particular aboot orders; he taks things gey muckle intill's nain han', aw think."

"O, I see the man's drift brawly—he wints t' rin up a heavy account against me, bit aw doot he'll fin' 'imsel' i' the wrang box yet, for I winna pey 'im. Aw'll jist

tell 'im 'at he can leuk for's peymen' t' them 'at employ't 'im, for aw'm determin't aw winna pey 'im a *rap* ahin the wye 'at he's ackit."

"Aw suppose," said Eppie, "it's been the minister 'at's sent 'im here, an' tell't 'im t' dee fat he thocht wiz richt, an' I'se warren Mr. Mair 'ill never think o' payin' 'im."

"Weel, aw dinna care a dite; they can arreenge that atween them; the wye 'at they've gaen aboot things is a perfec' insult t' *me,* 'cause, as aw said afore, there's naebody hiz ony bizznes wi' the aul' man's affecks excep masel'; bit bide ye still, they'll baith be here on the funeral day, aw suppose; an' I'se wauger I'll gie them twa line o' ma min'. I'se tell them fat like they are. Ay sall aw."

During the greater part of the time between Tam Paterson's arrival at Mains of Yonderton and the funeral, he moved about among the outhouses, looking at carts, ploughs, harrows and other implements of husbandry, and he was often observed to make pencil jottings in a small notebook, which he carried in his coat pocket. He was evidently taking stock. Then he "stoitet" out and in to the byres and stable, examining every cow, ox and horse separately, and in the most careful and deliberate manner. He took his station beside each animal in turn; passed his hand over the different points, then looked into the mouth, and, as soon as he was satisfied, out came the notebook and down went a few lines of description and the probable market value of the beast. In this way he attained to a tolerably accurate estimate of the value of the "cover" on the farm, and as he supposed that full information as to the amount of money that had been left would be afforded after the funeral, he would then, he believed, be able to tell at once the full value of the means and estate to which he had succeeded.

XXVII.—The Funeral.

As the day approached which, as Tam Paterson fondly believed, was to see him publicly recognised as the fortunate heir to the bulk of David Buchan's means and estate, he grew quite communicative and confidential with Eppie Watson and the other servants about the place. He opened his mind freely to the foreman relative to his future intentions about the lease of the Mains. "Aw think aw'll gie up the chop at Peterhead," he said, "an' start the fairmin'. Aw oonerstan' there's twal or fourteen year o' the lease t' rin yet, an', as the rent's braw canny, aw think aw sud mak a rael gweed thing o't. Ye've nae idaa man," he continued, "o' a' the diffickwelties 'at the like o' his 'at's commercial kine o' fowk hiv to conten' wi'. Atween the losses an' the disappintments 'at I've met wi' sin' aw begood business, aw'm jist aboot sick o't. Aw'll jist sattle doon here for the remainder o' the lease at ony rate, an' 'od, iv aw dinna mak' siller, aw'll seerly mak' oot t' keep fat aw hae fan aw enter, which 'ill be a gweed roon soom, iv the bools row richt."

The reader will observe that Tam's views on the subject of commercial success had undergone considerable modification since he first opened shop in Peterhead, when he never doubted that he was to become the architect of a colossal fortune. Experience is a grand teacher. It can impart, as the proverb informs us, a smattering at least of wisdom and common sense to a class of persons to which Tam Paterson might fairly be said to belong.

In one of the several conversations which he tried to strike up with Eppie, he inquired what her wages were.

"Peer three poun' ten i' the half-year," was her answer, "an little aneuch for the wark 'at I've had t' dee."

"O, it's verra fair wauges," said Tam. "I hiv nae doot bit ye've had *some* extra wark, only it coodna hae been verra muckle, for it's nae as if ma aul' frien' had lien."

"No, nae at the last," said Eppie, "bit ye surely canna hae forgotten 'at he lay the feck o' the winter, an' nott a heap o' attention. Aw'm safe t' say, unlee't a word, 'at there was for a month or sax weeks 'at aw wiz never muckle awa' fae's bedside nicht nor day."

"O, aw weel believ't," said Tam, "there's ey some bit jobbie adee fan there's dishealth in a hoose, an' as ye waurna engag't to be a sick norse, I'se be rael liberal wi' ye, an' gie ye a poun' mair than yer wauges for this half-year."

"A poun'!" exclaimed Eppie. "Aw'm surely mair nor obleege't t' ye, bit aw houp the maister 'ill hae providat something mair genteel than that for ma in his wull. Iv he hisna, ye can keep yer poun' t' yersell, for aw widna hae the name o't."

"Aw dinna think it neen likely," said Tam, " 'at he wid hae thocht o' pitten you in t' the wull for onything, an' ye sudna refeese the poun', or ye'll maybe be sorry for't aifterhin; 'a bird i' the han's worth twa i' the bus', mine ye."

It was with great difficulty that Eppie refrained from opening the flood-gates of her wrath upon him, but, in her ignorance of how things stood, and remembering, besides, that there was a "corp" in the house, she judged it the most prudent course to let his remarks pass for the present.

The day fixed for the funeral arrived—the company

assembled—an appropriate prayer was offered up by the Rev. Mr. Mair, and the mortal part of old David Buchan was borne to the last resting-place in the old churchyard, Tam Paterson walking at the head as chief mourner, and trying to put on as long a face as the position he occupied seemed to require. When the last offices had been performed, Mr. Mair, Mr. Corbie and Tam Paterson, along with a clerk whom Mr. Corbie had brought with him to make a minute of the proceedings (for, of course, it was not like a case in which it might be an object to keep down expense), these four returned to Mains of Yonderton, where they partook of a substantial dinner which Eppie had prepared for them by Mr. Corbie's orders.

During the brief interval between their return and the time that dinner was on the table, Tam had resolved to tell Mr. Corbie and the minister in very plain terms what he thought of them. We have often heard of self-confident hectoring fellows, who, when the hostile encounter but loomed in the distance, conducted themselves in such a bold and defiant manner as to make it appear that they were all impatience to seize the sword and meet the enemy in mortal combat, but, when the moment for action arrived, they took hold of their weapon but with a sickly grasp, and all their former courage seemed to ooze out at the points of their fingers. So it was with Tam Paterson. Though he talked in a loud and blustering manner in the absence of the enemy, yet, when he came to be face to face with the two respected representatives of the law and the Gospel, his courage somehow completely deserted him, and he had not a word to say on the subject of their conduct.

Nobody said much during dinner, but, before rising, Mr. Mair, in his own lofty style, said—"Friends, considering the circumstances in which we are assembled here to-day, I think it will be proper, before proceeding

to matters of business, that we fill our glasses and drink in solemn silence to the memory of the deceased."

"The memory of the deceased," said the company simultaneously, as each one raised his glass to his lips and drank off the contents.

At the near prospect of wealth that was now opening up before him, and under the softening influence of a good dinner and sundry glasses of toddy, Tam Paterson felt disposed to be on friendly terms with all mankind, and as he set down his empty glass on the table, he delivered himself as follows:—"I suppose, gintlemen, it nat'rally faa's t' me, as representin' the late Maister Buchan, t' say a few words b' wy o' thankin' ye for proposin' the memory of ma deceasit frien'. We may ca' it a toast, or we may ca' it a sentiment, bit fither it be the teen or the tither, I may weel drink till't onywye, for I never hid a truer frien' than the gweed aul' man 'at we've laid in the mools the day. Fowk said 'at he wiz grippy an' hard hannet, bit, for my pairt, I never saw onything o' the kine aboot 'im. T' be sure he wiz carefu', an' didna throw siller awa feelishly, bit that wiz naething mair than his deuty, an' aw cud never thole t' hear fowk railin' upo' him for that. The man had his peculiarities nae doot, as we a' hae, bit be that as it may, he's been a gweed frien' t' me, an' aw'm nae likely t' fôrget 'im in a hurry. It may be kent t' you, Maister Mair," he continued, " 'at nae lang ago, a cousin o' ma nain, 'at aw hinna seen for half-a-score o' years, tried sair t' ding ma oot o' the aul' man's fawors, bit, as a maitter ov coorse, he didna succeed, for Maister Buchan tell't me as muckle the last time 'at aw saw him in life. Bit though that same cousin has aye hid a pick at me, for fat rizzon he kens best 'imsel', yet I can heartily say I forgie 'im. Surely, gintlemen, fan aw think o' the prood position 'at I ockupee here this day as the heir an' execkiter o' the worthy man 'at we've jist laid in his last

restin'-place, in the auld kirkyard, I can weel *affoord* t' forgie him, an' a' ither body 'at ever socht t' injure ma' aither be word or deed."

On receiving a hint from Mr. Corbie that it was time to proceed to business, Tam cut short his harangue, but added, addressing the factor in a less pleasant tone, "Aw hiv only t' observe farder 'at aw think you, Maister Corbie, hiv been takin' fully muckle upon yersel' in connection wi' the bizzness 'at we're met upon the day, withoot first consultin' wi' me. Aw can only attribit it t' ignorance on your pairt as t' hoo things have been leeft. Only, as aw suppose there's been nae arreengement made bit fat wiz richt an' proper i' the circumstances, I can only express a houp 'at, fan ye come to mak' oot yer accoont against me, ye'll mak' a'thing as rizzonable as possible, or else there may be words aboot the payin' o't."

During the time that Tam had been speaking, the minister and Mr. Corbie frequently exchanged humorous glances, but said nothing.

XXVIII.—The Reading of the Will.

When the table had been cleared, Eppie was invited to take a seat with the company, and Mr. Corbie, drawing a legal-looking document from his pocket, said—"I will read over the will which was prepared by me some time ago, in terms of instructions received from our late friend Mr. Buchan, and which has been in my custody ever since it was written out. It is as follows:—This is the last will and testament of me, David Buchan, farmer in Mains of Yonderton, in the parish of ——. Firstly, I appoint my executors after-named to pay all my just and lawful debts, and death-bed and personal charges. Secondly, I leave and bequeath the following legacies, viz.:—To the Kirk Session of the said parish for behoof of poor and deserving persons residing therein, the sum of £20; to John Hooieson, who was for some years in my service, the sum of £10; and to Eppie or Elspet Watson, my housekeeper, provided she continues in my service up to the time of my death, the like sum of ten pounds. Thirdly, ——. But at this point the reading of the document was interrupted in a most unceremonious manner by Eppie exclaiming—"Ten poun', did ye say, Maister Corbie, only ten poun' t' *me!*"

"That's all," said Mr. Corbie.

"An' that's fat aw've been toilin' an' slavin' here for a' this time, an' me micht a' been comfortably sattl't in a hoose o' ma nain mony a lang syne if aw hid liket; oh bit it's ma nain blame, for aw micht 'a kent it; an' micht 'a *weel* kent it, for naething else wiz t' be expeckit fae a nabal vratch like 'im!"

Mr. Corbie was about to remonstrate with her about the unseemliness of her behaviour in breaking out in this

manner, but Tam Paterson put out his hand towards him and said—"Alloo me, Mr. Corbie," then, turning to Eppie, he said, in a severe tone, "Aw wonder, 'oman, 'at ye're nae ashame't o' yersel' t' speak that gate; aw think ma aul' frien' 's behaved verra handsome t' ye, bit be that as it may, aw canna bear t' hear 'im spoken o' in that disrespectfu' mainner aneth his ain reef-tree, an' afore his body be weel aneth the yird; so, iv ye canna behave yersel' mair discretly, an' wi' some respec' for ither fowk's feelin's, ye'll better gang ben t' yer nain ein o' the hoose."

"De'il speed yer impudence," retorted Eppie, " 'at I sud say sic a word afore Mr. Mair. D'ye *daur* t' speak that wye t' me in a hoose 'at I've maybe mair richt t' be in than ye hiv yersel'."

Tam Paterson was about to reply in the same strain, and there was likely to be a fierce war of words between the two, but Mr. Corbie sternly interposed, and said that this was neither the time nor the place for mutual recriminations, and that they could not be allowed; while Mr. Mair echoed the factor's words by saying, "they *cannot* be allowed; go on with the reading of the will, if you please, Mr. Corbie," and the man of the law proceeded. "Thirdly, I name as my executors, the Rev. Daniel Mair and Andrew Corbie, solicitor in Peterhead, and hereby direct them to pay the whole residue and remainder of my estate, of whatever description, and wheresoever situated, to Frank or Francis Hepburn, shipmaster, whom I hereby constitute my residuary legatee; and Lastly, I revoke all former wills made by me. In witness whereof," etc.

"Tut, tut, tut!" exclaimed Tam, on hearing the name of his cousin, Frank Hepburn, "that canna be the wye o't, Maister Corbie. Pit on yer specs man, an' look at the wull again. Ye're surely nae seein' fat ye're readin'."

Mr. Corbie politely assured him that he had read what was before him in the settlement, and that, beyond all manner of doubt, the residue of the estate was bequeathed to Captain Hepburn. A gleam of satisfaction was now evident on the housekeeper's face, and she was clearly meditating a renewal of her attack upon Tam, but the factor made a sign to her that she must not put in her word.

The destination of the residue of David Buchan's estate to Frank Hepburn was so entirely unexpected by Tam Paterson that he felt perfectly dumfooner't—as the saying is, you might have "knocked him down with a feather," and it was some time before he could utter a word, but as soon as he fully comprehended the altered state of affairs, he sat bolt upright in his chair, fetched a long breath, and, addressing Mr. Corbie, said—"Ay—an' *that's* the natur' o' the wull is't?"

"It is," said Mr. Corbie.

"An' fat's the date o't, said ye?"

"Fourth of August last."

"Weel, I ken for a fack 'at a short time afore that date the wull steed in my fawvor, for Maister Buchan tell't me so oot o's ain mooth, an' fan he made that wull 'at ye've read till's enoo, he cudna hae been in's senses, that I'm weel sure o', so 'at aw dinna believe the tessment's worth the paper it's written on."

"Well, I saw no appearance of anything wrong about him," said Mr. Mair.

"Certainly not," added Mr. Corbie. "We could tell you what it was that compelled him to make the change, but we are not called upon to do so—suffice it to say that we are aware he had good and sufficient reasons for what he did."

"O ay, ye think ye can affoord t' trate me ony wye ye like noo, but there's something aboot a' this 'at disna leuk verra weel. I thocht at first 'at that twa face't

hypocrite Frank Hepburn had been at the boddam o't a', bit some ither body maun hae hid a finger i' the pie, for I can see 'at you an' the minister here ken mair aboot it than ye're willin' t' lat on. I suspeckit there wiz some infernal jookery-packery gaen on fin neen o' ye wir at the pains t' tell me o' the aul' man's deeth till aw heard it be the merest chance twa days aifter. Bit *aw'll* hae the maitter siftet t' the foondation, an' that ye'll see. *Aw'm* nae the man quately t' submit till a loss o' this kine withoot kennin' fat for."

"You are welcome to adopt any proceedings you choose," said Mr. Corbie. "The executors will be quite ready to meet you. Meantime, I can only tell you that this deed is executed in due and proper form, and contains the exact wishes of the late Mr. Buchan, as expressed by him to Mr. Mair and myself."

"An' de ye raily think 'at aw'll be sic a silly fool as tak' *your* word for that?" exclaimed Tam. "That wull may be a perfect forgery for onything 'at I ken, an' aw can never believe 't t' be ony ither thing, but iv there's sic a thing as justice t' be gotten in this countra, aw'll hae't, *cost fat it likes.*"

Mr. Corbie smiled scornfully at this empty boast, for he well knew the bankrupt position of Tam Paterson's affairs, but his only reply was—

"Well, we cannot bandy words with you any longer; if you choose to be quiet and allow the business to proceed, you may remain, but if not, I shall be under the necessity of having you ejected from the house."

Thus threatened, Tam subsided into a sullen silence, and Mr. Corbie proceeded to break the seals that he had placed upon the "repositories," and to examine the deceased's papers. He had not proceeded far with this till he came upon a small packet which, when he took it up to examine it, caused him to exclaim, "Hullo, what's this? there's something for you yet;" and he handed it

to him for whom it was evidently intended. It was marked on the outside "T. Paterson's legacy — to be handed to him after my death."

"Ah," said Tam, brightening up, aw *thocht* he hidna forgotten me a'thegither. Ye'll see 'at this 'ill be a thoosan' poun' or so in big notes; jist a plan 'at he's faan on to save me payin' king's dues. O bit that wiz like 'im."

By this time Tam had got into the interior of the packet, and there he found—not bank notes for a thousand pounds or any other amount, but, to his utter surprise and bewilderment, only his own letter to Gibbie Ramsay, in which he requested the loan of a large sum of money to commence the herring curing, in virtue of the *certainty* he had of succeeding to Mains's entire fortune; and stated further that, as that worthy individual was then both old and very frail, it could not be long till he came into possession. At the foot of the letter Mains had written, with considerable care, though in a somewhat cranky and unsteady hand:

"I've aften said ye wiz a sharp chiel, Tam, bit ye've been far ower clever this time, for ye've been

Coontin' yer chuckens
Afore they were hatched,

or, to suit the byword to this letter—

Curin' yer herrin'
Afore they were catch't."

It was truly edifying to hear how Tam Paterson stormed and raged at this discovery. He had no notion how the unfortunate letter had come into Mains's possession, but as it was certain Gibbie Ramsay must be to blame in some way for such an awkward *contretemps*, he denounced him as a "mean, interfeerin' scoonrel," who had been the cause of his ruin. Mains he characterised as a "vindictive auld sinner," for acting towards him as he had done, and the executors were

roundly abused for aiding and abetting him in the alteration of his settlement, but as they were not at the pains to reply, he soon took up his hat and made for the door, remarking, as he did so, that he supposed he was not wanted longer there. Eppie, however, must have a parting shot at him. "Faur's yer respec' for the auld man noo?" she said. "Od, it jist a kine o' reconceels ma t' the scurry tratement 'at aw've gotten masel' t' see you so completely ootwittit, for if there's a mean, low-life't slipe on the face o' God's earth, ye're the man."

We could not set down Tam's reply to this attack, and can only say that it was more plain than polite. But, with an angry woman's obstinacy, Eppie was determined to have the last word, and when he had got about twenty yards away from the house on his way to the Kirktoon, she stood in the door and shouted after him at the utmost pitch of her voice, "Hoo 'ill ye sattle wi' yer creditors noo?—a saxpence i' the poun', aw daursay!" He neither looked round nor made any reply, and this was the last that was seen of Tam Paterson in that neighbourhood. He made several attempts to get a process raised about David Buchan's will, but no agent in Peterhead would take up his case. The true reason, no doubt, was because it was well known that he was unable to pay the costs of an action, for, had it been otherwise, he would have got law to his heart's content; but Tam thought the reason must be that the lawyers were unwilling to enter on a suit in which Mr. Corbie would be the defender, and he sagely remarked that "the tae corbie widna pick oot the tither corbie's ee!"

Very soon after this there came a crisis in Tam Paterson's affairs — his estates were declared bankrupt, and he himself "lap the countra" in order to avoid the diligence of his creditors, leaving his wife and two young children totally unprovided for.

XXIX.—Subsequent Arrangements.

When Mains's affairs had been thoroughly looked into, it was found he had left property to the value of about five thousand pounds, a very large sum indeed for a farmer in those days. By the settlement, the whole, with the exception of the three trifling legacies, devolved on Frank Hepburn, who was then on his passage home from South America. He arrived in this country about two months after the date of Mr. Buchan's decease, and was much surprised to hear of his good fortune, for the possibility of his reaping any benefit from the death of his old friend had never occurred to him. But he showed that he had still the same generous and unselfish disposition as had always characterised his earlier years, for, when recent circumstances were fully explained to him, he settled five hundred pounds on Mrs. Paterson and her children, and, over and above the ten pounds to the housekeeper, he instructed Mr. Corbie to pay her one hundred pounds for the kindly manner in which she had attended to her master's comfort in his declining years. After such a windfall as this, it is almost unnecessary to say that her marriage with the widower crofter came off as soon as the preliminary arrangements could be made. With regard to Mrs. Johnston of Belhelvie, who had ever acted the part of a mother to Hepburn, he made an arrangement with the factor that a younger brother of hers should succeed Mr. Buchan as tenant of Mains of Yonderton, to whom he freely made over the whole stocking and effects upon the farm (so carefully

inventoried by Tam Paterson) on the express understanding that Mrs. Johnston should reside there in comfort for the rest of her days. To ensure this he improved the dwelling-house at his own expense, and she lived there with her brother to a ripe old age. We believe it is a son of this brother of Mrs. Johnston's who is a tenant of the farm to this day, and to whom reference is made in the opening chapters of this story as being a gentleman farmer of the modern school.

After making these liberal provisions, Hepburn had still upwards of three thousand pounds of a free residue remaining, which proved of the utmost benefit to him in advancing his prospects in the profession he had chosen. Nor did he forget the interests of his friend, Patrick Johnston, for, with a generosity rarely to be met with, he made him participate in the advantages which the possession of capital can always command in whatever line of life one may choose to adopt. Like Hepburn, Patrick Johnston now became a master, and both acquired shares of the vessels they respectively commanded. Johnston continued to prosecute the whale fishery in the Straits, where, for fully a quarter of a century, he maintained the character of a wise and successful commander—prompt to act when occasion required, and cool and intrepid in presence of the dangers that beset the voyagers in the Northern Seas. He had married early in life a young woman to whom he had been devotedly attached from his boyhood, and a numerous family of sons and daughters blessed their union. About the year 1844 he retired from active service afloat. At that time he was 55 years of age, possessed of excellent health and a sound constitution, and, as he had made a good deal of money, he resolved to spend the remainder of his days in Aberdeen, in the enjoyment of that competency which had rewarded the toils and dangers of his hitherto active life.

Hepburn had also a long and very successful career, though the sphere in which he moved lay far apart from that of his early friend. For a good many years he traded between this country and America, and having, from long experience and careful observation, attained to an extensive knowledge of the products and markets of the South American continent, his owners urged him to settle in Valparaiso for a time, that he might act as their agent there in buying and sending forward shipments of such goods as were suited for the home markets, an arrangement which greatly facilitated the dispatch of their vessels and increased the profits of the trade, in which, by the contract entered into between the parties, Hepburn liberally participated. His income was now large, and he became a very wealthy man; but, although his settling abroad caused a long separation from his early friend, letters did occasionally pass between him and Patrick Johnston, so that each continued to be aware of the other's whereabouts and well-being. Hepburn was never married. It was said by some that he had met with a disappointment in an attachment which he had formed to a lady shortly before he went out to settle in South America, and that that circumstance, as much as anything, induced him to fall in with an arrangement that would take him away for a time from scenes which had been associated in his mind with some tender recollections. But, if such was the case, he prudently kept the matter secret, for he never made the most distant reference to any disappointment of this nature, even to his most intimate friends.

XXX.—Forty Years After.

We now carry the reader forward to the year 1853, a period of nearly forty years from the date of David Buchan's death, which took place in the spring of 1814. Here we might dilate to any extent on the remarkable changes that had taken place during the period above alluded to. We might point, for instance, to the rapid progress that had been made in every department of what might be called the age of iron and steam; how during these forty years the old lumbering stage coach and the carrier's cart had given place to the locomotive and the railway car; how the ordinary rate of travelling had been increased from eight or ten miles to forty or fifty miles an hour;* how heavy and clumsily built sailing craft, like the good ship "Oscar," had to a large extent been superseded by the beautifully-moulded and graceful clipper, or the iron steamboat of gigantic proportions, propelled by engines of five or six hundred horse power; or we might allude to the fact that while the whale fishing, so long and so successfully prosecuted by Patrick Johnston, has, in consequence of the introduction of gas and other illuminating substances, ceased to be carried on, save on a somewhat limited scale; the trade in the curing of herrings, which, in the year 1813, was but a floating fancy in Tam Paterson's not very fertile brain, had, in 1853, been so largely developed as to

*This story appeared as a serial in *Aberdeen Weekly Free Press* about 1876.

become the staple industry of the town of Peterhead, "the Broch," and in fact most of the larger towns on the east coast of Scotland. But facts of this nature, however interesting they may be from a statistical point of view, do not exactly lie in the way of our present story, which, by this time, we daresay, the reader will think should be drawing to a close. Tam Paterson, who, in a small way, may be called the villain of the piece, has now disappeared from the stage, and we shall therefore confine ourselves, in what follows, to the few remaining incidents in the career of Frank Hepburn and his life-long friend, Patrick Johnston.

After the former had been located in South America for more than twenty years, as noticed in our last chapter, Mr. Johnston received a letter from him in the autumn of 1852, in which he stated that, though he had been long absent from his native land, he had always loved to cherish the thought that he would return to it to spend the gloaming of his life, and that, as he was beyond sixty, he thought the time had come for finally retiring from business — that, in short, he had already made such arrangements as would permit of his quitting Valparaiso in about six months from the date of his letter, and that he would write again on his arrival in England. His next letter intimated his arrival in London on the 18th of March, 1853, and stated, at the same time, that he must remain there for about ten days in order to finally settle some matters of business, but that he intended to leave for Aberdeen by the steamer on Wednesday, the 30th of the same month, arriving in Aberdeen on Friday, the 1st of April. It was one of the many advantages that powerful steamboats had over the sailing craft, that the time of their arrival at the end of their voyage was known, and could be depended on. Forty years before this, when what were known as the London "smacks" were on the passage, the time taken

to come from London to Aberdeen and *vice versa* varied from four days to three weeks, or even a month, according to the state of the weather and the direction of the wind, but, at the time we are now speaking of, the passage could be made by the well-appointed vessels of the Aberdeen Steam Navigation Company in from thirty-six to forty hours, and, apart from any unforeseen occurrence, the hour at which the vessel would arrive in port could be fixed and relied on as an absolute certainty.

The prospect of again meeting Hepburn after an absence of so many years afforded his friend Patrick Johnston the utmost satisfaction, and, as the day fixed for his arrival drew near, he could speak of little else but recollections of their early life together, and the pranks and ploys in which they had engaged in their youthful days. Then he would wonder what like he would be, whether he would be much changed since he had seen him last, and whether he would remember this, that and the other thing that had happened to them in the years long gone by. These early reminiscences made him unusually cheerful and light-hearted, but the day before the expected arrival he seemed pensive and thoughtful. Mrs. Johnston, who was tenderly attached to her husband, had noticed this, and as they sat together in the evening by their snug parlour fire, she rallied him on the lowness of his spirits, and with affectionate interest asked him the cause of it.

"I don't know how it is," he said, "but I cannot get the events of the day on which the 'Oscar' was lost out of my mind. I have tried over and over again to dismiss them, and to think of something else; but I *cannot* do it. They always come up again."

"You have good reason to remember that day," said his wife. "It was on that occasion, was it not, that your friend Mr. Hepburn so gallantly snatched you from a watery grave?"

"It was," he said, "although it is exactly forty years ago to-morrow, I can recall all the incidents of that memorable day with perfect minuteness — the flattering calm of the morning, alluring us into a position of danger, in order that the storm might, as it were, be more certain of its victims. There we lay, off the Ness, with scarce a ripple on the placid bosom of the deep--

Like a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

Yet within a quarter of an hour thereafter, it was blowing great guns, as we used to say. Then there was the expression of sorrow that was depicted on every countenance as we dragged our anchor and neared the fatal shore—the staggering crash, the falling masts, the horrible grinding noise made by the vessel as she bumped and writhed upon the jagged rocks, and the exclamations of horror that arose from the spectators on the shore, as one after another of our crew was swept into the boiling surf that hissed and raged around us. I seem to see it all at this moment with something like the distinctness of the reality."

"Dear me," exclaimed his wife, with a kind of shudder at the vividness of the picture, "If you go on at that rate you will make me quite nervous. No doubt it was a very sad occurrence; but you who have been all your lifetime familiar with the dangers of the deep, I cannot understand how this particular case should so haunt you to-night, when it is so long ago since it happened."

"It was, indeed," he replied, "a very sad occurrence. No such calamity has occurred here since, but I have a strange presentiment that something serious is about to happen. I do trust that nothing serious will come over Frank Hepburn."

"O, fie! I wonder to hear you," she said. "You're surely getting crazy; Mr. Hepburn will be all right, no

fear of him. He will be here by this time to-morrow. It's not like you to take such strange fancies into your head."

"No, as you say, it's not like me; but that only makes it the more noticeable."

"I see how it is," she said, "you have allowed the warmth of your attachment to your friend to run away with your cooler judgment. When Mr. Hepburn arrives to-morrow all right, you will be inclined to laugh at your gloomy thoughts."

"Perhaps you are right," he said. "I sincerely trust you are."

When he retired to rest that night, his sleep was neither sound nor refreshing—disturbing dreams of shipwreck and drowning occupied his disordered fancy. But there was one thought more prominent than all the others, standing out with perfect distinctness from a jumble of confusion and absurdity, and it was this. He fancied himself afloat in a boat among foaming breakers at the back of the North Pier at Aberdeen, when, rising to his feet and looking over the bows of the boat into the sea, he saw the face of a drowning man looking up at him out of the water, and stretching out his arms appealingly for assistance. The face was like that of his foster brother, Frank Hepburn, but older looking than when he saw him last. He immediately, as he thought, laid hold of the man, and awoke from his sleep in the act of pulling him into the boat. A painfully distinct impression of the features and whole circumstances remained on his mind after he awoke, but he said nothing of the dream to anyone, as he was certain he should only be laughed at, though he himself could not help thinking it was a foreshadowing of something that was about to happen.

XXXI.—The Wreck of the "Duke of Sutherland."*

Friday, the first day of April, 1853, dawned with heavy rain and a pretty strong gale blowing from the south-east, but on the whole the weather was not such as to cause very serious apprehensions for the safety of the shipping on the coast. Nevertheless, some persons who were expecting friends by the steamer were on the out-look for her, scanning rather anxiously the state of the weather to seaward, and calculating what chances there were of her being able to cross the bar in safety. It need hardly be said that Mr. Johnston was one of the number, for he felt strangely anxious about the safety of his friend, whom he knew was on board. After mid-day, the gale moderated a good deal, though rain continued to fall, and a very heavy sea was running on the bar. There had been a good deal of rain for some days previously, and the river Dee was much flooded, which no doubt increased the danger to any small vessel attempting to enter the port.

About three o'clock in the afternoon the steamship "Duke of Sutherland," from London to Aberdeen, rounded the Girdleness and dropped her anchor to wait until the signal should be made for her to enter the harbour. At half-past five it was deemed quite safe for her to come in, for a small sailing vessel had made the port in safety about an hour before—a circumstance that tended to allay any anxiety that might have previously existed—and the requisite signal was accordingly hoisted.

*An interesting account of this wreck will be found in the Appendix.

The anchor was then lifted, and the vessel put about to make an offing sufficient to enable her to take the bar in the proper course. She then stood inward, making her way nobly through the heavy seas that rolled across her bows from the Girdleness. She had almost passed the point where any danger was believed to exist, and was just upon the bar where the freshet in the river caused a dangerous cross sea, and at that point two huge waves in quick succession struck her on the quarter, carrying her a good distance to leeward. Not obeying the helm, the engines were reversed, but scarcely had she gathered stern-way, when another sea made a clean breach over her, and threw her on the iron-bound masonry at the extremity of the North Pier or breakwater, with her broadside to the sea. Immediately after she struck on the rocks the stern part settled down into deep water, while the passengers and crew betook themselves to the poop, where, exposed to the fury of the sea, they looked to the shore for help. The vessel lay so close to the pier that those on board could easily make themselves heard by the persons on shore, and such was the position of the wreck and the unpreparedness of the spectators for any such calamity as that which had now happened, that effective assistance could be but very tardily rendered, for, before a communication could be established betwixt the vessel and the pier, some of the passengers had been washed off and either been dashed on the rocks or perished in attempting to reach the shore.

After several unsuccessful attempts had been made to cast a rope on board, they at length succeeded, but the vessel continued to sway and roll so heavily that its use was extremely difficult and dangerous, as at one time the rope would be elevated in mid air and a few moments thereafter immersed in the water. But even this hope of escape, precarious though it was, did not long continue, for, after one or two persons had been dragged to the

land in the "cradle" more dead than alive, the vessel gave a tremendous lurch, and, to the dismay of all, the rope parted and left the now helpless occupants of the wreck to the mercy of the waves, which ever and anon swept off some of the hapless victims into the surging sea.

As soon as Mr. Johnston saw that the vessel had been thrown upon the pier and was likely to become a total wreck, he became deeply impressed with a conviction that his dream of the previous night was to meet with a literal fulfilment, "and who knows," he said to himself, "but a merciful Providence may have thus forewarned me, in order that I may be the more prepared to take such measures as shall be the means of saving the life of my friend—I may almost call him my brother—Frank Hepburn, in some such way as he saved mine just forty years ago this day." The thought inspired him with fresh energy and courage, and he accordingly hastened to take up his position on that part of the beach which was associated with his sleeping fancy, and which was, at the same time, the exact point at which a person attempting to escape from the wreck would be driven to the shore. There were some boats drawn up at the spot and several fishermen were hanging about. On board the ship, amid all the confusion and alarm that prevailed at such an awful crisis, Hepburn was calm and self-possessed. He watched for some minutes the abortive attempts to cast the rope over the wreck; and when all hope of deliverance by this mode had been cut off, as before explained, he began to cast about in his mind whether any other means of escape might be open to him. He measured with his eye the distance to the sea-beach and calculated his chances of reaching it. Had he been a younger man, he would have had more confidence in an attempt to save himself being successful; but though he was not so young as he had been, he was hale and strong; and as he momentarily expected the outstanding portion

of the wreck to be submerged, he resolved to make a bold effort to swim ashore. In casting about for something that might aid him in this attempt, he most fortunately lighted on a life-buoy, which he adjusted in such a manner as to make it of very great assistance. He then threw himself into the sea, and, as the tide was favourable, he made good progress towards the beach and would probably have reached it in safety, but, unfortunately, his feet got entangled in one of the stake nets that bristle along the coast, and he had not sufficient strength to extricate himself, though the buoy enabled him to keep his head above water. By this time his friend Patrick Johnston was hastening to his assistance. Ever since the disaster had happened, he had been keeping a sharp look-out in the direction of the wreck, and as soon as he observed a swimmer battling with the waves and struggling to reach the shore, he appealed to some of the fishermen who were standing by. "Bear a hand, my lads," he cried. "Out with a boat here as fast as possible. You are brave men, I know; and we will save yon poor fellow who is making such a struggle for his life; he'll never come through the surf, I fear, without assistance."

A boat was quickly launched, and six brave fellows seated themselves at the oars, while Johnston took his station at the bow to keep his eye on the swimmer and direct their course to him. Forward the boat sped through the boiling surf and over the tops of the white-crested waves, tossed up and down with such violence that every advancing billow threatened to engulf them, but still steadily propelled by the brawny arms of the stalwart fishermen. "Keep her away!" cried Johnston in encouraging tones, "keep her away, my lads; bend to your oars; nobly done my brave fellows; a few more good strokes and we are at him. Easier a bit. Keep her here now, right in the wind's eye." By the time they

reached him his progress had been completely arrested by the net, and his strength was so far exhausted that probably in a few minutes more he would have sunk beneath the waves. While the rowers directed all their attention to keeping the boat's head to the sea, Johnston, with a boat-hook, laid hold of the cordage of the net, by which means he was able to steady the boat as long as enabled him to lay hold of the drowning man, and the first view of his countenance revealed the exact features and expression he so well remembered in his dream, and he had no doubt whatever that he looked upon the face of his cousin and foster brother, Frank Hepburn. Even in his present position of extreme excitement and peril, he could not fail to be forcibly struck with the fact that his dream was in every way the exact counterpart of the position and circumstances in which he found himself at this moment—as like indeed as a photograph is to the real object. With the utmost difficulty he got him into the boat, but he was too much exhausted to speak or even to take any notice of those who had so gallantly risked their lives to rescue him from a watery grave, save that, when his eyes rested for a few seconds on his deliverer, such an expression of tenderness and affection lighted up his pale countenance as showed that he knew him. They reached the shore again in safety, and Hepburn was conveyed to a tavern close by, where stimulants were administered and a change of clothing provided, and that night he was so far recovered as to be able to be removed to Patrick Johnston's house, where, it is unnecessary to say, everything was done for his complete restoration and comfort that skill and affection could devise.

And thus it fell out by a remarkable coincidence that, while Hepburn saved Johnston's life when the "Oscar" was lost on the 1st of April, 1813, Johnston was the procuring cause of Hepburn's life being saved when the "Duke of Sutherland" was wrecked within a few

hundred yards of the same spot on the 1st of April, 1853, being the fortieth anniversary of the first-mentioned event.

Sixteen lives were lost on this occasion, and, since the wreck of the "Oscar," no event cast such a gloom over the city. Happening, as we have already said, on the very same day forty years after, it revived in men's minds the recollection of the melancholy fate of the "Oscar" and her unfortunate crew, and even yet, the one event can scarcely be mentioned without the other being also referred to.

The "Duke of Sutherland" was an iron ship and soon went to pieces. A few hours after she struck on the rocks, the coast was strewed with wreckage of every description, and the vessel herself had all but disappeared, though many will remember that, for a great part of the following summer, portions of her iron ribs, and the more unwieldy parts of her engines, remained prominent objects at the spot where the catastrophe happened. And when the gentle wavelets of the summer sea were seen sporting playfully around, and kindly kissing, as it were, those shattered fragments of the wreck, one was almost tempted to doubt whether it could have been the same watery element that had torn asunder those massive beams of iron and heaved the lighter metals of the paddles on to the rocks as if they had been billets of wood.

XXXII.—Former Scenes Revisited.

It was some weeks before Hepburn recovered from the fatigue and exposure which his bold attempt to swim from the wreck to the shore involved. At his time of life, and coming, as he did, from the warmer climate of South America, it was, indeed, a wonder that he survived the shock; but, thanks to his excellent constitution, he not only survived it, but, so far as he was aware, felt no evil effects from it during the remaining years of his life.

As the reader is aware, it was a cousin of Patrick Johnston's who was now tenant of the modern farm of Mains of Yonderton, and Hepburn naturally felt a strong desire to visit the old place once more, and indeed to spend some part of the summer months there. With this view he took his seat one fine afternoon, towards the end of June, 1853, on the top of the "Banks of Ythan" coach, which then started from Queen Street, Aberdeen, and ran between that city and Old Deer, the district in which the Mains was situated. He had not travelled this road for nearly forty years, but he had a very distinct recollection of what like things were when he had seen them last, and the changes and improvements that met his view at every turn quite surprised him. The road from Aberdeen to the Buchan district with which he had been familiar in the days of his youth, lay up the Gallowgate, along Old Aberdeen and the "Seaton Dykes," and over the old Bridge of Don or "Brig o' Balgownie." But all this was changed now. The magnificent turnpike between Aberdeen and Ellon had been constructed

by King Street road. The new Bridge of Don, a noble structure of five arches, had been opened for traffic in the year 1831, and now formed the great exit from the city in that direction. As the coach crossed this bridge, Hepburn could see, about a quarter of a mile further up the river, the fine old bridge with its single Gothic arch which he had once known so well and which once formed the great highway to the north; but now it was shunted on to a siding, as it were, like a thing that had served its day and was comparatively unused, being chiefly interesting as a work of art and a relic of the past. Yet he felt that it had a familiar look about it, and he remarked that, if it had not been for this same old bridge, the granite spires of the Cathedral, and the Imperial Crown upon the King's College, which were all well-known landmarks, he could not have recognised the locality.

Nor when they emerged from the suburbs of the city into the open country were the changes that he observed on the general aspect of the district less noticeable. The picturesque hamlets and the groups of turf-built and stob-thatched cottages, with their ascending columns of savoury peat reek, which formerly had been so characteristic of the low lands of Buchan, were fast disappearing and substantial modern buildings taking their place. He tried, in passing, to get a glimpse of his early and humble home in Belhelvie, but now it evidently formed part of a large farm, for the old cottage had disappeared, and the only indication that there had once been a human habitation at the place was the presence of two or three old gnarled trees, which, it pleased him to think, might have been saplings growing in the same spot when he was a boy. The "herd loon," who used to follow and govern with despotic sway the few high-boned cows on the farms lest they should stray over the fell dykes or open ditches to feed on the rank clover or green corn,

had almost wholly disappeared, and most of the fell dykes and ditches as well. These old divisions which followed, in most cases, the natural conformation of the ground and enhanced its artistic effect, had given place to tile drains and stone dykes and iron fencing, so that every inch of soil might be rendered productive. Small holdings had been run together and divided into large rectangular fields, each held containing perhaps as many acres as the average sized croft did in the early part of the century; and the cattle wandered at will in such of those fields as the legal system of "rotation" devotes to grass from one end of the season to the other. All this Hepburn could observe in the course of his journey, and when he reached Mains of Yonderton in the evening he could see that it too had partaken, to the fullest extent, of the improving spirit of the age, for so great was the change that had taken place on that once familiar homestead that, had it not been for some of the surroundings, he would not have known that ever he had seen the place before. The old thatched dwelling-house and the tumble-down steading had disappeared, and extensive buildings of modern construction had been substituted. There were now no wet hollows, bearing only sprots and rushes, as in former days, no unenclosed fields, no waste land, but the whole available surface was under crop and in a high state of cultivation. Even the peat moss was being rapidly encroached upon by the plough, and he could see that the solum of what used to be the rather sizeable sheet of water, where Tam Paterson had smashed the miniature ship, was now carrying what promised to be an abundant crop of oats.

A new generation of people had also sprung up while their fathers had passed away. Though Hepburn moved about a great deal, he had been there for a week or ten days before he met with any one whom he had known formerly. But, finding himself in the Kirktown

one day, it occurred to him that he might embrace that opportunity of taking a look of the last resting-place of David Buchan and his wife. (Mrs. Johnston, his foster mother, had been buried beside her husband in Belhelvie.) With this view he stepped into the churchyard, at the gate of which he encountered the aged sexton. He was a patriarchal-looking individual, with grey hairs and bent form, and looked like a connecting link between a present and a past generation.

"Do you happen to know," said Hepburn, addressing him, "where the remains of one David Buchan and his wife lie in this churchyard?"

"D'ye mean a man o' that name 'at wiz a lang time tenant o' Mains o' Yon'erton?" enquired the sexton.

"The very same," said Hepburn.

"Weel div aw ken faur *he* lies," said the sexton; "he liv't in this pairis a' 's days, an' awat a siccar auld boy he wiz."

"You knew him then?"

"Aye, brawly that."

"It must have been a long time ago, for it is now close upon forty years since he died."

"Aye, but I kent 'im lang afore he dee't. I wiz a servan' at Mains o' Yon'erton in Mrs. Buchan's time, an' for a gweed while aifter that."

"Indeed, what's your name, may I ask?"

"Hooieson's my name—Jock Hooieson."

"Is it possible!" exclaimed the other. "I remember you perfectly. My name's Hepburn; I used to be at Mains of Yonderton often when I was a boy."

"Hepburn," said Jock. "Od, there wiz a callant o' that name eest to come there ilky simmer for a while, bit ye seerely dinna mean t' say 'at ye're him?"

"Yes, I am the same individual, though very much altered since then," said Hepburn, grasping the other warmly by the hand.

"Weel, ye seerely *are* cheeng't, bit hoo cud it be itherwise. Aye, man, an' ye're Frank Hepburn," he said again, as they both seated themselves on a flat stone to have a talk together about old times.

Jock Hooieson's history was soon told. It appeared that a year or two before Mr. Buchan's death Jock had gone to be a servant at the manse, for Mr. Mair had a big glebe, and required to keep a man for working the land. On a vacancy occurring, he became beadle, bellman and gravedigger, and had acted in these capacities for about thirty years. He was allowed a few rigs of land in the immediate neighbourhood, and, though now old and frail, he was quite comfortable. He was extremely fond of news, and, like many old men, he had a wonderful memory for things that had happened in his early days.

After Hepburn had, in turn, given him the outlines of his own career, Jock said: "Aye, an' so ye're come back t' see the auld place eence mair, aifter a' yer wanderins. Aw think, noo fin a mine, 'at ye wiz conneckit wi' this man's faader 'at's in't noo."

"O yes," said Hepburn, "we were more like members of the same family than anything else."

"Weel, did ever ye see sic a redd up as the Mains his gotten. Aw sometimes wonner fat auld Dawvid Buchan wid think if he wiz leukin' up an' seein' a' yon improvements."

"I believe he would think the place was spoiled," said Hepburn, "for he did not like new-fangled things."

"Na, na, jist hushel awa i' the auld wye wi' him; man, isnint astonishin' fat wye he made the siller he did, wi' the kine o' fairmin' 'at he gied it?"

"Yes, it is; but he had a few hundred pounds to begin with, and then he wrought hard, and, somehow or other, he was always fortunate."

"Weel awat he vrocht hard, an' keepit ithers at it tee, for he hid nae patience wi' idleseat; od dinna ye

min' upo' the suddenties 'at he eest t' gie you sometimes fan ye wid a latten the beasts in amo' the corn. Tam Paterson eest t' please 'im better wi' the like o' that than ye did."

"Aye, Tam was a better herd than I was, and managed to keep the old man's opinion for long, though he lost it in the end."

"Weel, bit div ye mine the day 'at ye lickit Tam Paterson i' the moss, an' sent 'im hame squilin' like a stiket bull? Aw winner fat's come o' Tam noo; he wiz a great man for a file, bit aw believe he gaed a' throw't i' the hinner en'."

"So I believe," said Hepburn; "I am told he left this part of the country many years ago, and it is generally believed that he is dead long ago."

XXXIII.—The Old Times and the New.

Jock Hooleson had been a rather shrewd observer in his day, but he was now an octogenarian, and talked about former times with that garrulity which is often the characteristic of extreme old age. Having been "minister's man" for many years, he had seen a good deal of the clergy in the surrounding district. Like another worthy of the same type, of whom we have read somewhere, "though he cudna exactly *preach* he could *draw conclusions*," but as Jock had been born and brought up in the locality, he knew little or nothing of the world beyond the narrow sphere in which he had moved. In the desultory conversation that followed, Hepburn learned that Mr. Mair, the minister, had been dead for about fifteen years. "Aye," said Jock, "he wiz a gey bizzy mannie Mr. Mair, bit a brow bodie for a' that. T' be sure he wizna verra muckle o' a preacher, bit he tell't's oor deuty, an' iv we did as he baads dee, aw'm thinkin' there wid be nae fear o's."

"I cannot say that I have any distinct recollection of him," said Hepburn, "but the impression I had of his character was just what you state."

"O aye," said Jock, "he was a bit feckless bodie i' the poopit, bit as far as ever I saw, his private life wiz upricht and consistent."

"And that is saying a great deal," said Hepburn.

"Aye is't man," answered Jock, "an' mair than can be said o' mony o's neebors, for there's been some gey queer laads o' ministers roon aboot here i' my time.

Beein' sae lang aboot the manse, I've seen a gweed hantle o' them, an' wi' their Presbytery meetin's an' ordination denners, an' so on, they heeld a gey time o't. I widna like to tell ye the state 'at I've seen some o' them in, that fou 'at they waur hardly able to sit upo' their beastie's back t' gang hame t' their nain pairis."

"Well, you see," said Hepburn, "it matters little how ably men of that stamp may preach when their practice is so far wrong."

"Aye, aye," said Jock, "it's a' verra weel to say 'dinna dee as I dee, bit dee as I bid ye,' bit a man's life 'ill ey hae mair wecht than his sermons, an' that's the wye 'at Mr. Mair wiz ey sae weel respeckit."

"The normal tone of society in the district must have become more healthy since then," said Hepburn; "such conduct on the part of a parson would not be tolerated now if it was known."

"Weel, ye see," answered Jock, "opposition's sometimes a gweed thing. It's nae noo as it wiz eence, fan ye beat t' gang t' the pairis kirk or t' nae kirk ava. There's plenty o' Free Kirks noo, an' Dissenters o' a' shade an' colour, an' though I never thocht muckle o' that non-introoshin' muvment, there's *ae* gweed effec' 'at it's hid, it's garr't a lot o' the auld kirk lads pull up an' mine fat they're aboot. I sanna say but there's puckles o' them yet mair teen up aboot gettin' a shot at a hare or a rabbit, or the workin' o' their bit glebe, than they sud be, bit 'od if a minister wiz t' dee the things noo 'at lots o' them did half a centry ago, an' thocht naething aboot it, he wid be made a *wardle's* wonner o'."

"Well, I'm glad to hear," said Hepburn, "that the Buchan folks have been making progress in so desirable a direction. You have more schools and you have more churches, and if education and religion be good things, the result should tell favourably on all classes of the community."

"A body wid nat'rally think sae," said Jock, "an' yet it disna seem to be the case. Nae doot there's mair licht, an' fouk are a heap mair knowin' than they waur forty or fifty years syne, but they're a heap mair selfish, an' there's a hantle less sympathy an' gweed feelin' atween the rich an' the peeir. The gweed auld times are awa' noo, man, fan honest, weel t' dee fairmer fouk, like yer frien' Dawvid Buchan, had nae pretensions aboot them, an' a'body lived in gweed neeberheed. Ae dear me," he continued, "the merry times 'at I've seen; the lauchin' an' the daffin' at the claiks, an' the hairvest hames, an' the eeil pairties, maisters an' servan's, gentle an' simple a'th'gither, as happy's happy cud be; bit that days are awa' noo. Yer uppish fairmer nooadays is mair concern't for the comfort o's beasts than for that o's servan's, an' he needna wonner 'at the servan's hiv nae interest in him or in onything 'at concerns 'im."

"No, he certainly need not," said Hepburn, "and there must be something far wrong somewhere to produce such a feeling of alienation and mistrust between two classes of persons whose interests are really identical. Perhaps all these things will come right when some of the social problems that at present perplex society come to be better understood."

"O aye, we ey like to think 'at there's a gweed time comin'; bit it's a sad sair maitter 'at, at the present time, wi' a' oor kirks, an' wi' a' oor squeels, we sud be makin't appear as if there wiz some trowth i' the auld byeword, 'the nearer the kirk the farrer fae gweed'; an' 'at the mair squeelin' 'at some fouk get, it only maks them the clever rascals."

"I would fain hope," said Hepburn, "that you take far too desponding a view of the present as compared with the old times. Meantime, having been so long abroad, I can only judge of what I see, and it is quite evident that the outward aspect of the Buchan district

has been very much improved. The state of agriculture, and the houses, and the roads, are all very different indeed from what they were when I was familiar with them long ago."

"Aye, that's true," said Jock; "an' speakin' o' hooses, is na yon a gran' castle 'at's upo' Mains o' Yon'erton noo? There's a gey difference atween yon an' the stob-thackit hoosie 'at Dawvid Buchan lived in. Bit I suppose he wiz jist as happy as this man is."

"He might have been," said Hepburn, "and if he was not, it certainly was not the smallness of his house that prevented it."

"An' as for the roads," said Jock, "t' be sure they're anither thing a'thegither sin I mine. A gweed road wiz a rare thing here aboot half a century ago, but noo we hiv them in a' directions, an' the warst o' them noo is aboot as gweed as the best o' them wiz than. But it seems we're nae gaun t' haud wi' gweed roads o' the auld-fashioned stamp—they're speakin' aboot a railway beein' made atween Aiberdeen an' Peterhead, an' maybe on t' the Broch as weel."

"A railway through Buchan!" exclaimed Hepburn, "that would, indeed, be a grand step in advance."

"There's some word o' twa o' them man," Jock said. "It seems there's ae pairty for takin' the line alang the coast a' the wye, an' there's anither pairty for takin't throw the countra a bit t' accommadat' the fairmers. Ye see, as ay wiz sayin' we hiv opposition kirks noo, an' fat's t' hinner's t' hae opposition railwyes tee."

"But surely one line might be devised that would sufficiently accommodate both parties," said Hepburn.

"Od, ye wid think sae, bit if it comes this wye, aw'm tell't it's jist t' come up throw the hallow there, an' alang this side o' that bit plantin' at the en' o' Mains's parks."

"And is it known when the work will be commenced?" said Hepburn.

"O, aw'm nae thinkin' it'll be lang," said Jock. "I'se tell ye fat I saw the ither day 'at leuks as if they war in eernest aboot it. I gaed owerby t' speer fat oor had been fix't for the burial o' a young bairnie o' Chairlie Dickie's 'at deet gey an' haisty o' the croop, an' as I turn't the corner o' the widdie doon bye there, I sees twa weel-dress't like chiels stravaigin' aboot i' the middle o' the neist park. Ane o' them wiz cairyin' a lang pole an' the ither hid a shorter stick ower's shoother, jist like a roon pailin' post, wi' a forligig o' the tap o't. I teuk it t' be some kine o' a pistol for sheetin' wi'. Weel, I behauds them a whilie, an' the ane wi' the lang pole gaed on afore a bittie, as if he wiz spacin' the grun'. Noo I'se wauger ye winna guess fat aw thocht they micht be aifter."

"No, really I could not."

"Weel, I had read or heard o' fat they ca' duels beein' fochen something in this fashion, an' it jist occurr't t' me 'at the twa lads had casten oot aboot something, an' wantit t' see which o' them was the best man, an' 'at they had fix't upo' that oot o' the wye place for their deedly wark for fear they sud be interrupit."

Hepburn could not refrain from laughing heartily at such a ridiculous notion on the part of the old sexton. "No, no," he said, "the Buchan folks have a very high sense of honour about them, and they are advancing in many ways, but I hope they will never become so polished in their manners as to seek to vindicate their honour either by sword or pistol."

"I wid houp not," continued Jock, "only it leukit unco like it at first. Weel, syne, as I wiz sayin', the chiel 'at had the short stick, he set it doon on't ein, an' it apen't up intill a thing wi' three legs, faisent thegither at the heid, jist for a' the earth like the crooks 'at ye've seen the tinklars pit up t' boil their pots on. Then he leukit throw the bit thing o' the tap o't, an' aw expeckit

every moment t' hear the shot gang aff, bit jist as aw wiz switherin' whether or not aw sud gie the alairm t' prevent sarious consequences, he teuk a bit beukie oot o's oxter pooch an' began to vreet in't. Aw saw syne 'at aw had misjoodged their intentions, so aw made bold t' gang up t' them an' spear fat they waur aifter, an' they taul' me 'at they waur survuyin' the grun' for the Buchan Railway."

"There can be no doubt," said Hepburn, "but a railway would be an immense advantage, and would give a fresh start to every branch of industry, as it would make the London markets as accessible as those of Peterhead and Fraserburgh now are. The 'mairt' that used to be killed at Mains of Yonderton could be sent from here on the Saturday and placed on the stall of the Smithfield butcher on Monday morning, in as prime condition as if it had only been sent to Peterhead."

"*Ex*-terordinar!" exclaimed Jock, with a strong emphasis on the first syllable of the word. "Fat wid auld Dawvid Buchan hae thocht o' that?"

"Of course, he could never have believed such a thing to be possible," said Hepburn.

"Na, aw'm weel sure he cudna," said Jock, "bit it's like them 'at lives langest 'ill see maist ferlies. I dinna expec' t' see mony new things in my time, for aw'm ayon' the fourscore noo, an' afore lang some trusty brither o' the trade 'ill dee for me fat I've deen for mony a ane. It's bit a short tack o' oor life 'at the best o's hae."

"No doubt it is," said Hepburn, and your tack and mine too will soon be out. It is a saddening thought that probably nineteen out of every twenty of the people whom I knew here forty or fifty years ago are now lying in this churchyard."

"An' that's weel min'et," said Jock, "aw believe aw wiz gaun to lat ye see faur Dawvid Buchan an' his wife

lie." As he said this he rose up from the stone on which they had been seated, and Hepburn followed him to a mound at the foot of the west wall. There was a luxuriant crop of nettles on the spot, for the ground was wretchedly kept, and out from among the nettles appeared the upper part of a small headstone, the short inscription on which had become almost illegible.

"This is the graif," said Jock, and, as Hepburn looked down upon it with a feeling of sadness, his conductor continued, pointing his finger as he did so, "Eppie Watson, 'at wiz hoosekeeper till 'im for a gweed file, an' her man, lie a few yairds to the richt, an' that's feel Peter Milne's graif a wee bitty ayon that again—ye'll mine upo him brawly," he said, "he eest t' come in aboot t' the Mains aften in Mrs. Buchan's time. Ye see," he continued, "deeth pits us a' on a level — the servan's free fae's maister, an' the rich an' the peer a' lie doon thegither. Lang an' sair did aul' Mains fecht an' slave himsel' makin' siller, an' laith wiz 'e t' pairt wi't fin it cam' in amo' his han's, bit for a' 'at he hid, he hid to share the common lot wi' his ain dependants, an' the half-wittet simpleton 'at hidna a bawbee t' bliss 'imsel' wi'."

"That's quite true," said Hepburn thoughtfully, "this world is but a poor portion at the best, and if Providence sends us riches, we should try to keep them in their proper place."

This was what Hepburn himself had always endeavoured to do. By a stroke of good fortune in early life, and by patient industry afterwards, he had become a wealthy man; only he did not value money for the mere pleasure of hoarding it up, but for the power to do good which it placed in his hands. He lived for eight years after his return to his native land—years of such quiet and contentment as flow from a well-spent life. During these years his hand was ever open to relieve the poor or

to assist his friends when their circumstances seemed to require it — and were it not delicate ground to touch upon, we could point to several well-known and respected families who are, at this moment, enjoying the benefit of the large fortune he bequeathed at his death — the foundation of which, he used to say himself, was the money which he inherited so unexpectedly from his old friend David Buchan, farmer in *Mains of Yonderton*.

APPENDIX I.

The Corn Famine of 1782.

WRITING of the parish of Monquhitter about the period above mentioned, the minister (Rev. Alex. Johnston) makes special reference to the food scarcity as follows:—

Prior to the year 1775, corn, long of ripening, was liable to be frosted. Since that period the parish has been more or less distressed by the effects of mildew. About the beginning or middle of August, the oat plant (for the barley suffers not) assumes a fiery red colour; black spots then burst forth towards the root, and, according to the season, gradually or rapidly ascend, till they reach these fibres that support the ear. From that moment the circulation in the plant ceases; the grain ripens no more, and in proportion to the virulence of the disease, yields a smaller or greater quantity of meal, or becomes a heap of desperate sorrow. Various theories have been advanced to account for this phenomenon—by the operation of insects—by mineral exhalations, by the caustic quality of lime used as manure, and by a situation too confined. Certain it is that some enclosures, comprehending from six to ten acres each, and surrounded by hedges and belts of wood, have suffered most seriously. In the year 1789, however, this vegetable disease occupied a larger sphere, and it diffused its baneful influence on fields which enjoy every advantage that the sun and air of this climate can bestow.

In seasons of scarcity this parish has always suffered.

The tales told of the seven dear years, as they are emphatically termed, which concluded last century, are indeed tales of woe. Some of these seasons were not entirely unfriendly to vegetation, if the farmer had been provided—which he was not—with healthy seed to bestow on his fields. The province of Moray, and some of the best land along the east coast of Buchan and Formartine abounded with seed and bread; but most of the inhabitants of this parish, reduced to misery, had neither money to purchase, nor horses to carry these essential articles. A few facts will illustrate their extreme distress. From the time that famine was felt, to the time that plenty returned, oatmeal sold for £16 Sc. per boll, and all the victual stipend, due for seven years by the heritors, was paid for, with interest, at that rate. One Thompson, wadsetter of Hairmoss, driven from home by want, was found dead, near the shore, with a piece of raw flesh in his mouth. Of the 16 families that resided on the farm of Littertie, 13 were extinguished. On the estate of Greens, which at present accommodates 169 individuals, three families (the proprietors included) only survived. The extensive farms of Tochar, Greeness, Overhill, and Burnside of Idoch, now containing more than 100 souls, together with some farms in the parish of Turriff, being entirely desolated, were converted into a sheep walk by the Errol family, to whom they belonged. The inhabitants of the parish in general were diminished by death to one-half, or as some affirm, to one-fourth of the preceding number. When the means of saving the living and of burying the dead began to fail, natural affection was in a great measure suspended. A fellow George Allan, having carried his deceased father upon his back, halfway from his home to the churchyard, threw down the corpse at the door of a farmer, with these words—"I can carry my father no further. For God's sake bury his body. But if you chuse not to take this

trouble, you may place it, if you like, on the dyke of your kailyard, as a guard against the sheep."

Of the parish of Glass, about the same period, the Rev. John Cooper writes:—The King's bounty, in 1782, transmitted by the Barons of the Exchequer, of 50 bolls meal, with what the funds of the parish afforded, preserved the lives of the poor. The people at that period were meagre and ghastly; but the diseases that were apprehended did not follow, owing, as was supposed, to their seldom getting a full meal of such corrupted victual as the season produced. So little productive was the oats or barley that many were known not to have a peck of meal from a boll of dried corn; and the colour so black that it resembled more the ordinary dust in the mills, than meal for the use of men. The tenants were greatly reduced, and many of their cottars were obliged to retire to the manufacturing towns for employment, by which the numbers are fewer than before.

APPENDIX II.

Total Wreck of the "Duke of Sutherland" Steamer and Loss of Sixteen Lives.

(From *Aberdeen Journal,* Wednesday, 6th April, 1853.)

We have this day the melancholy task of recording the particulars of a calamity, involving a loss, both of life and property, which has happily had no parallel during the last forty years. On Friday evening, about half-past five o'clock, the Aberdeen Steam Navigation Company's fine steamer "Duke of Sutherland" was totally wrecked within twenty yards of the New Pier, at the mouth of the harbour—a catastrophe which, we grieve to add, resulted in the loss of 16 lives and most part of a large and valuable cargo.

The "Duke of Sutherland" left London at half-past seven o'clock on Wednesday evening with 25 passengers on board, and a general cargo. The passage was a very easy and pleasant one, with the wind at south-east, up to Thursday night, but by 4 a.m. on Friday morning the wind had much increased in violence, accompanied with heavy rain. Its full force, however, did not materially impede the progress of the vessel; but it became evident, as she proceeded, that other craft had not been so favourably situated, or were less able to stand out, some wreckage being passed, but without affording any discovery as to the name of the vessel or vessels that must have foundered—certainly with the crews.

When the steamer reached the bay—coming round the Girdleness, about 20 minutes past three o'clock—the

wind was blowing very fiercely and somewhat variably from S. to S.S.E. There was also a heavy sea on the bar, and the freshet of the river was setting down very strongly; and there not being sufficient water to admit at once sailing in, Captain Howling cast anchor in the bay. Precisely about two hours afterwards, the flag was hoisted on the staff at the pierhead, intimating that the state of the tide admitted of vessels entering. The captain having remarked this, took his vessel to a comfortable offing, in order to point her head for the channel, and then made for the harbour. It is believed, indeed we may say known, that he did not anticipate danger — a small sailing craft having previously got safely in. There is generally a lull on what is called the "bar"— where the sea and fresh water meet — but on Thursday night, the direction of the wind causing the surge to roll heavily inwards, whilst the strong current of the river rushed outwards, caused a "cross," which took the steamer, with disastrous effect as she entered. Just when nearing the bar, a heavy sea struck her on the quarter, and carried her to the leeward; almost immediately another struck and dashed her in the same direction. At this moment the captain, who was at his post, gave the order to the helmsman "to starboard"; but notwithstanding the utmost efforts of five or six men (including the mate and steward), the wheel was found to be totally powerless. The engines were also ordered by the captain to be backed, an instruction which was put in execution; but scarcely had the vessel got sternway when the second sea making a clean breach over her, threw her upon the shelving rocks at the extremity of the breakwater and extinguished the fires; and the water coming in from a hole stove in the bottom, the engineers and firemen, for their own safety, had to leave the engine room. The vessel thus fixed on the rocks, lay at first broadside on to the breakwater of the pier; afterwards

the stern went round to the northward, in which position, after rolling from side to side, and often threatening to go completely over to seaward, she settled among the rocks and began to break up—the foremast immediately going overboard. At this time there were few spectators of the lamentable catastrophe—probably not more than a dozen individuals, whose feelings may be better imagined than described. Captain Howling, standing on the bridge, was seen giving his orders with coolness to get out the lifeboats. While the crew were lowering one of these into the water, there was heard a tremendous crash, and in a moment the fore part of the ship parted from the other near the foremast, but, fortunately, the seamen had all previously withdrawn from it, owing to the violence of the sea, and the awfully destructive swinging about of the foremast, spars and rigging. The stern now settled into deep water, and a scene was beheld too sickening and too appalling to describe. The female passengers were clinging to the rails and spars, and almost every sea was carrying them out of the arms of those who were leading them to the boat. One was observed to leap in a frantic state from the poop into the boat, which by this time the seamen had succeeded in getting into the water, and in this attempt was rather severely hurt. Only seven men and a woman got into the boat, in charge of the mate. From the slipping of the rope by which the boat was held to the vessel, she was carried away without getting any more on board, but after riding gallantly over the heavy surge to the beach, all were landed in safety. The steamer's second boat was stove in by the sea, and rendered useless.

Within twenty minutes of the time when the vessel struck, the lifeboat, belonging to the Harbour Commissioners, was got launched, and made the wreck with some difficulty, but receiving damage in her upper works while alongside the steamer, only 15 persons, two males

and 13 females, were taken off in her, and with these she was pulled ashore, and gained the beach in safety. She might, we believe, have contained four or five more; but, as it was, there was hardly enough room to use the oars in such a critical position. Turning our attention again to the wreck, we observed that the passengers, who were still on board, had by this time clustered round the starboard paddlebox, the vessel amidships having sank down solidly in the rocks. To render them relief the Harbour Master, Captain Morrison, and others, proceeded to the Round House, at the upper end of the pier, for Dennet's rockets and life lines, and when these were procured, after some delay, it was unfortunately found that the powder had got damp, and many ineffectual attempts were made to "fire a rocket." Owing to the heavy rain, and the surf that was sweeping over the pier, and no doubt also to the inexperience in the use of this valuable invention, at least twenty attempts were made without success. A little investigation, however, revealed the cause of the failure, which was owing to the escape of the powder; and on the next trial, those taking the principal charge of it—Captain Morrison, Dr. Sutherland, and a mechanic, whose name we have not learned—had the cheering gratification of seeing the rocket and line carried beautifully right across the ship, near the funnel. With this line the crew on board got off the pier hawser, and, after fastening it well, a party in charge of it on shore tightened it up. But then it was found that there was no cradle to work with. In the dreadful emergency a temporary cradle was made from one of the boxes which had floated from the wreck, and this, with the ripe "hitches," instead of rings, was run out to the steamer, and one passenger, Miss Leask, brought ashore. It was evident, however, that the box cradle was not safe, and in place of it slings were made, by which several passengers were suspended from the

hawser by the waist, and thus saved. The captain up to this time was managing all on board with apparent collectedness, but in his endeavours to save a female passenger, who got entangled in the netting of the poop, a quarter boat, swinging from the rope struck him, and he tumbled down, apparently considerably hurt. This injury no doubt paralysed all his future efforts. Almost immediately afterwards, when communication had been established with the shore, and the rope having become entangled on Miss Leask, being conveyed across, Mr. Howling, it is supposed, with the intention of unravelling the rope, swung on upon it. But just as he was warping himself across, a heavy sea struck both him and the wreck; he was next seen hanging by his hands only, and immediately after he dropped exhausted into the boiling surf, and was drowned. So near was the wreck to the pier that the captain's brother, perceiving that he was attempting to warp to the shore, called and signalled to him to return.

The Harbour lifeboat being unable to make way through the breakers again, six seamen, inconsiderately but with the most laudable motive manned a salmon cobble, and put off to the wreck. They got safely through the breakers, and succeeded in picking up two or three of the crew or passengers, whom a single wave had swept from the poop, but in returning to shore, the boat was carried to leeward, and, after receiving some heavy seas, was suddenly capsized, and five of her men were drowned. The only one, James Falconer, who was saved, floated ashore, on an oar or piece of loose timber.

Commander J. N. Strange, of H.M.S. "Archer," gave very valuable assistance in superintending the arrangements on shore, as did several of the officers and crew of that vessel in the execution of these. One of the crew of the lifeboat boldly jumped from the pier to save the life of the head engineer, who, although provided

with a lifebelt, was quite exhausted, and one of the crew of the coble, who was entangled among the salmon nets, but life was found to be extinct, and the brave fellow had to return in order to make good his own safety. Mr. Anderson, the manager of the company, also manifested a strong sympathy, and was most active in superintending the measures taken on the pier. Dr. Nicol, with other gentlemen, gave efficient assistance in the means of a restorative nature applied to the parties as they were landed from the wreck, and a large number of seamen, and many others, gave most willing aid in pulling the lines and rendering all the assistance in their power.

But undoubtedly the greatest credit is due to the chief steward, Duncan M. Christie, who proved himself the hero of the lamentable scene. The brave man succeeded most remarkably in preserving his self-command to the last—making almost superhuman exertions on behalf of his fellow-creatures, and displaying an amount of intrepidity and heroism which it was truly affecting to behold, and as universally acknowledged as it was admired. It is impossible indeed to realise or describe all the varied difficulties of his position. He had not only to superintend the arrangements on board (the master having been lost at a comparatively early period of the scene), but, while labouring himself most manfully, had, we believe, to use all kinds of exhortations, entreaties and even threats, to secure his own safety, and that of his fellow sufferers in their perilous position. At one critical moment, just as the next to the last party, consisting of three females, came across by the hawser, the rope from the vessel to the pier got foul of the bridge of the steamer, when a seaman proposed to cut the rope, which would probably, if not certainly, have left the three remaining persons to a sad fate, the steward had to threaten to knock him overboard ere he was persuaded to desist from his inconsiderate

purpose. As an example of Christie's self-possession, we may state that, on leaving the ship, which he was the last to do, sending the other two men before him, and remembering the entangling of the rope, he opened his knife, and put it between his teeth, at the same time turning his eye eagerly to the vessel, to watch the rope, in order to be ready to act in case of its getting entangled, which we believe it did just as he got ashore, when he actually cut it, at the moment that he was being dragged on the pier. It is not, we feel satisfied, too much to claim the credit to this brave fellow of, in a great measure at least, saving the whole who escaped by the apparatus to the pier.

In all there were 55 souls on board. Total loss from the steamer 11; from the coble 5—16 souls, 4 females and 12 males.

Ligertwood, the second mate, was taken off by the lifeboat belonging to the Harbour on her first trip; but, with the noble purpose of affording assistance to others, giving his watch to the keeping of a gentleman on shore, he joined the crew of the coble, which was capsized, and thus perished. Burness (one of the passengers) was by calling a fireman, and had recently arrived from Australia; he had £50, the result of saving, on his person, which was got upon his body, on its being recovered. The stewardess, Miss Paul — an interesting young woman, who had sailed for many years in this capacity, in steamers belonging to the port, and had but recently entered upon her duties on board the "Duke"— struggled long in the water; and it is believed to have been in an endeavour to save her that the chief engineer, Fyfe, lost his life within a very few yards of the pier, after keeping himself afloat with a lifebuoy for nearly a quarter of an hour. The case of Mrs. Bremner, in all its circumstances, is a very affecting one. It would appear that she had suffered from sickness on the voyage,

but on the vessel's nearing the harbour mouth she had partly attired herself to come on deck, when a sad catastrophe occurred. The perilous position of the ship seemed to overwhelm her with dread, and she fell in a faint, in which she was seen by the captain, who used the brief moments at his command in endeavouring to revive and assist her; but alas! soon after this her body must have been carried away by the waves that were sweeping over the decks. Mrs. Lawrance, another cabin passenger, was also seen on deck, half dressed, and clinging to the railings, but from these she must have been swept off at an early period of the wreck, as her body came ashore about seven o'clock the same evening.

When the lifeboat belonging to the Harbour had reached about half the distance, the crew observed, struggling in the waves, a man, who turned out to be George Ross, a fireman, belonging to the "Duke," who had fallen overboard by a gig striking him, Bruce, the carpenter, being washed off along with him. The latter met a watery grave, and Ross was much injured and exhausted when he was picked up. The lifeboat, after taking Ross on board, made directly for the steamer. Almost immediately on reaching her, a large cask, that was floating about, struck the boat with great violence, in consequence of which it became water-logged. The boat lay close to the starboard quarter of the deck—and 15 persons, among whom were Miss Milne and Miss Robertson, were got on board and safely landed.

The "Duke of Sutherland," we are informed, was well equipped in regard to the means of saving life. She had on board two regular lifeboats, and one of the ordinary boats was tubed and fitted for a lifeboat. There was likewise a quarter-deck boat. Besides there were twenty lifebuoys, two quarter-bridge mattresses, or floats, capable of carrying sixteen persons, and all the quarter-deck cushions and companion cushions were stuffed with

cork. The provision was greatly beyond what the Act requires, which is, we believe, one lifeboat and two lifebuoys.

The scene along the beach while the efforts were being made to save the crew and passengers was of the most harrowing description. The shore was strewed with goods, pieces of wreck, and passengers' luggage; women were running in a frantic state, screaming and tearing their hair, while their friends and relatives were perishing at their own doors, and bitter were the complaints as to the want of proper preparations for such a catastrophe. The recent losses on our shore, where the want of these was so painfully felt, and which was noticed in the language of hope and caution at the time, should have led to better means of safety being provided, but little, we regret to say, has been done. It is indeed a melancholy thing to see one's fellow-creatures thus perishing within speaking distance, in circumstances which, with ordinary effort, at least a portion of them might have been saved; and sure we are, there was not a spectator of the deplorable disaster of Friday evening, who did not painfully notice the want of that order and promptitude, and efficiency of apparatus so essential to successful exertion in such an emergency.

After the remaining passengers and crew had been saved from the wreck, a number of the men belonging to the "Archer," and the military and supernumerary watchmen, were stationed on the pier and beach, and bonfires were lighted up in order to secure any bodies, or portions of the cargo that might be washed in. The Lord Provost, Shoremaster and others of the Harbour Commissioners were on the spot till nearly midnight. The beach has also been watched ever since, and no parties have been allowed to remove articles without establishing a claim to them.

The following leading article appeared in the *Aberdeen Journal* of 6th April, 1853:—

Who is to Blame?

We have just witnessed one of the most fearful calamities that have occurred in this neighbourhood within the memory of living men. A gallant vessel, crowded with happy and hopeful beings, and laden with rich merchandise, has been dashed to pieces within ten minutes' sail of her quiet berth in the harbour. One minute saw joyful expectation changed into black despair, and before two hours had elapsed, sixteen persons had perished under the very eyes, and within the hearing nearly of many thousands, notwithstanding every effort that devoted men could make to save them. The crew of one boat that went to the rescue became the victims of their generous humanity, and perished with those they had gone to succour. There was no want of daring and self-devotion — no want of instances of individual heroism. Every available means was adopted; and our chief ground of regret is that so few means were available in such a grievous emergency. We say our chief ground for regret—for in that is comprehended our sorrow for lost lives that might have been preserved, and for the lowering of the character of the city for humane providence, against those calamities to which our shores are perpetually exposed.

This is saying much. But let anyone peruse the narrative which is given elsewhere, and see whether it be saying too much. Nay, there are to be found among those who are capable of forming a right opinion, many — and these are to be counted not be tens or twenties, but by hundreds — who will tell you that, had the port been provided, as it might have been, with the means of rescue from shipwreck, at least one half, if not the whole, of the lives that were lost on board the "Armitstead" and

the "Venus," four months ago, and the "Duke of Sutherland" on Friday night, might have been saved.

Now for this we blame no one. Corporate bodies are careful and methodical in their supervision of those matters which are within their more immediate and direct jurisdiction, and which uniform periodicity brings necessarily within the operation of a system; but in the case of probabilities, and matters that are casual and incidental they are uniformly and proverbially improvident. It is always the same; and long security conforms the characteristic heedlessness. With respect to the inefficiency of the means at command for preserving life, every shipmaster, every shipowner, every seaman about the harbour, to whom it was a circumstance of direct and personal concern, knew as much of the state of matters as any member of the Harbour Board — probably more than most of them. And yet things are as we see. Four months ago there was a lifeboat, but there was not a crew. Who was to blame? It had been found that the crew, who were formerly paid some £2 a head per annum, were seldom to be got hold of, and it was thought, naturally enough, but rather unreasonably, that they might trust to the generous manhood of the seamen in the port to man the lifeboat in an emergency. However, it is scarcely fair to tax the generosity of others as a substitute for our own justice; and a late example had afforded little encouragement to men who live from hand to mouth, to risk their means of livelihood without any prospect of remuneration; for one of the volunteers on board the lifeboat, on the immediately previous occasion of its being used, had been seriously injured, and one poor fellow was laid up for a month, and had never received a sixpence! There was, on the same distressing occasion, a Manby's safety apparatus brought to the beach. But apparently no one could manage it. Well, who was to blame? No one.

The Harbour Board vindicated themselves; and, retrospectively, even with the last two days' woes before our eyes, we are willing enough to accept their vindication. It is the same with the railway companies. It is the same with the provision for security, in case of shipwreck, made on board of vessels. It is the same at all times in the provision of probabilities. On Friday night the lifeboat was immediately resorted to; and the hope of many men and many families, and almost the only apparent resource, under Providence, between them and death and desolation, lay in that ricketty tub, which a shipmaster kicked his foot through a month ago, when trying its timbers. It had been mended of course. Mended! a nine year old lifeboat, moulding in a shed! It had a good crew, and brought off a living freight from the vessel, but it suffered many injuries at the wreck—for it seems to have been easily injured; and by the time it returned to the shore it was scarcely manageable. The chamber that ought to have been airtight was filled with water, and the men sat in water up to the knees. Of course it was worse than a common coble. A number of fine fellows, who would not take the word of the crew, with so much at stake, but rather took their places, found it perfectly useless. Then there was the Manby apparatus; but, as before, it was unworkable, and Dennet's rockets were resorted to. Here again, those who were employed in firing the projectile were as zealous as men could be. They did their best, but professedly they had had little experience, and in the precious time, during which it might have been employed in saving the lives of those who were dropping into the sea, under the very eyes of their relatives, was occupied by twenty successive fruitless attempts to ignite the rocket with a lucifer match! Again, there was no cradle; and the poor exhausted sufferers had to be slung by a rope under their armpits, which added both to the

pain and the terror of their perilous landing. What has the Committee, appointed four months ago, by the Harbour Board, to "take steps" in these things, have been doing all this time? How many meetings have they held?

We shall not blame anyone, but merely state certain facts; but who will say that things ought not to have been otherwise? The Seamen's Society, which certainly does not seem to have benefited its members very much in many ways, have at least begun to do something for them in this matter. They have begun to build a lifeboat of their own, to be manned by seamen belonging to the port; so that they may not be altogether dependent on the providence of the local authorities for the means of rescue in cases of shipwreck. They have been largely assisted by some benevolent ladies belonging to the Society of Friends, one of whom, we believe, was examining the old lifeboat the other day, to ascertain whether their gift was necessary or not. We are glad to see this spirit among the seamen. But something more is wanted. It is impossible to trust with any security to temporary impulses that may, after a year or two's impunity allow their object to sink out of sight. We cannot rely with safety, either on temporary impulses, or on the desultory supervision of a public corporation; and in recapitulating the painful facts of these melancholy disasters, our purpose is not to find fault, but to show the necessity for the Legislature making it absolutely imperative on local authorities to provide and maintain, in due efficiency, all possible means of saving the lives of shipwrecked seamen. Common humanity and common prudence require that there should be one or more lifeboats in continual order, with crews practised in working them, that there should be a fund contributed to by the port and the public for the maintenance of the families of those of the crew whose lives may be lost in the discharge

of their public duty, and that the Coastguard, where there is a station, and where there is not, that a body of men connected with the port, should be exercised regularly at stated periods, in the use of an efficient Manby apparatus. Such precautions are nothing more than what the most ordinary humanity demands; and it would be well if the Government would take steps for making such arrangements uniform and imperative, in so far as they can be made imperative, along the whole coasts of the kingdom. It would be well, of course, if we could dispense with Government interference, and trust to the spontaneous providence of public and private humanity; but experience shows that we really can scarcely do so. The very courage of our seamen makes them careless. Their great fault is the dark side of their great value, and the same perhaps may be said of the people on shore, although, unfortunately, in their case, it is too frequently displayed at the expense of others.

From the *Aberdeen Journal*, 13th April, 1853:—

Wreck of the "Duke of Sutherland."

We find it stated in the Monday's proceedings of Parliament, that the Lord Advocate has instituted a full inquiry into the circumstances attending the late melancholy calamity at this port, and the means available on the occasion for saving the lives of those on board the vessel. This proceeding we cannot but approve of under the circumstances, although it is a painful thing to find the authorities of this city subjected to such a reflection as an inquiry of the kind implies. In another column will be found an explanation laid before the Harbour Board yesterday by the committee appointed four months ago, to provide the requisite

appliances for rescue from shipwrecks. How far the statements therein contained are likely to be regarded as satisfactory, either by the public or the Lord Advocate, we shall not take upon us to say, but to us at least they appear very indefinite.

In the *Journal* of the same date there appear the following additional particulars of the wreck, in continuation of the account of the previous week's issue:—

The coble that proceeded from the beach was manned by six individuals, viz., P. Ligertwood, second mate of the "Duke"; Alexander Christie, seaman; John Robertson, mate of the "St. Lawrance"; James McIntosh, seaman; George Reid, do.; and John Falconer, do. Falconer, the only survivor, gives the following account of the melancholy result. The coble had six oars, and though with difficulty in such a sea, was got to the steamer, where it lay for a considerable time alongside. The carpenter, George Bruce, jumped from the quarter deck to the coble, but unhappily got entangled in the salmon net, which was under the ship's quarter. One of the crew of the coble thrust an oar under Bruce, attempting to assist him, but the oar broke. The unfortunate man got quite clear of the net, but was thrown over to the other side of the quarter, and taking off his sou'wester, and signalling for assistance, shortly afterwards perished. The boat itself was entangled in the net, and the rope by which it was held alongside the vessel, broke, by the violence of the waves. At this time, one seaman and three females were aft upon the steamer, one of the latter being the stewardess, who was clinging tenaciously to the ropes. A sea then came and took away the ship's stern, almost filling the coble with water. The crew, however, still kept her under command; but when about two ship's lengths to the northward of the steamer, and somewhat nearer the shore than the vessel, the boat capsized, and all the crew, except

Falconer, were thrown out. He too, shortly afterwards dashed into the surf, but kept firm hold of an oar, and on floating towards the shore, picked up a piece of wreck, which he pushed towards Robertson, one of his companions, who was all but exhausted, having exerted himself too eagerly at first. Falconer afterwards lost sight of Robertson, who eventually sank, unable to hold out. The former still clave to an oar, and, when he reached the beach, a number of persons joined hands, and got him ashore in safety. All the others perished, a short way out, and within sight.

We understand that an official investigation into the circumstances connected with the wreck was commenced by the City Fiscals the day after its occurrence, and that it is still being prosecuted, with the care and determination required in the elucidation of a subject so extensive and delicate.

A public meeting was held, in connection with the late shipwreck in the Union Hall on Monday evening. The audience—a very numerous one—was composed to a considerable extent of seamen, ship carpenters, &c. Mr. John Macpherson was called on to preside; and resolutions were passed which will be found in another column, deploring the recent melancholy event, and imputing blame to the authorities; affirming the necessity of making proper apparatus, and a regularly trained and paid crew for working it; appointing a petition to the Harbour Commissioners, to be circulated for signature to that effect; and nominating a committee to carry out the resolutions.